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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Initial reports of States parties

Guinea*

* The present report is being issued without formal editing.

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Introduction

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly by its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979.

The Convention's primary purpose was to encourage States more fully to recognize and to apply the principle of equal rights between men and women as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 31 March 1953.

Each State Party would therefore undertake to adopt national legal measures prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women, including anachronistic social and cultural patterns of conduct capable of impeding the advancement of women.

Guinea signed the Convention (which entered into force on 3 September 1981) as early as 17 July 1981, and ratified it on 9 August 1982. The timely manner of its accession was proof positive, if such were needed, of Guinea's consistent commitment to international institutions and instruments. Moreover, this decision can hardly be considered surprising, if one recalls that in 1972 Mrs. Jeanne Cisse, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea to the United Nations, had become the first woman ever to sit on and preside over the Security Council.

The Republic of Guinea has been unable to submit a report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in accordance with the provisions of article 18 of the aforementioned Convention for a number of reasons. On the one hand, these relate to the change of political regime brought about by the sudden death of former President, Ahmed Sekou Toure, and, on the other, to the impact on the technical departments of frequent changes to ministerial portfolios.

In spite of the frequency of these changes, the Government of Guinea continues to attach priority to the advancement of women. This can be seen in the steady rise in the number of girls attending school, with a view to achieving parity with boys in the next few years, and in the fact that early pregnancy is no longer considered a punishment which can mean the end of a girl's education. The abolition of forced marriage, the banning of polygamy, and the presence of a significant number of women in political positions are realities that are gaining ever wider acceptance among the majority of citizens.

As this report will show, Guinea's policy of decentralization has paved the way for the creation of domestic mechanisms contributing to the formulation and dissemination of population policies such as the Gender and Development Framework Programme. It has also facilitated the creation of numerous non-governmental organizations that are engaged in activities of interest to women.

Part One
Basic facts about Guinea

1. Introduction

– Official name	Republic of Guinea
– Political status	Republic
– Independence	2 October 1958
– Official language	French
– National languages	Soussou, Peuhlar, Mandinka, Kpélé, Kissi, Loma, Wamey, Mano
– Religions	Muslim (85%), Catholic, Protestant (15%)
– Monetary Unit	Guinean franc (GF)

1.1 Geographical position

Situated in West Africa, on the fringes of the Atlantic Ocean, the Republic of Guinea has a total surface area of 245 857 km². Bounded by the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Senegal to the north, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau to the north-west , the Republic of Liberia and the Republic of Sierra Leone to the south, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the east, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and the Sahara to the north, Guinea is often described as the water tower of West Africa. All of the sub-region's major rivers rise in Guinea: the Niger, the Sénégal, the Mano, the Cavaly, the Loffa, and the Gambia.

The Republic of Guinea has one dry and one wet season and a hot and humid climate. The country is made up of four very different natural regions:

- Lower or Maritime Guinea (alluvial plains)
- Middle Guinea or Fouta Djallon (mountains and plateaux)
- Upper Guinea (savanna and highlands)
- The forest region of Guinea (vegetation and heavy rains).

It also has seven administrative regions, the special zone of Conakry, and 33 prefectures, 38 urban municipalities, 302 sub-prefectures, and 303 rural development communities.

The population of Conakry, the capital, has grown significantly. The regions of Middle Guinea have seen the highest levels of emigration, while the forest region of Guinea and Middle Guinea have experienced high levels of immigration.

Although Guinea is one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of its agricultural, mineral and energy resources, its social indicators (literacy, life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rates) are among the worst in the continent.

1.2 Demographic trends

According to the National Directorate of Statistics, the population of Guinea, estimated at 7,500,000 in 1996, was set to rise to 8,796,000 by the year 2000. Some 51.3 per cent of the population are women and almost 70 per cent live in a rural

environment. The population growth rate is of the order of 2.8 per cent, of which 0.4 per cent is accounted for by immigration. The population is relatively young: 44 per cent of all Guineans are under the age of 15. Around 29 per cent of the population live in cities and the remaining 70 per cent are rural dwellers.

The urban growth rate stands at five per cent. The population is unevenly distributed, with 39 per cent of the population living in the most urbanized region (Lower Guinea), which includes Conakry.

Life expectancy at birth was 47 years in 1992 and 53 in 1995 (National Directorate of Planning, a survey of demographic trends). The gross mortality rate is 17 per cent, while the infant mortality rate, estimated at 136 per cent, varies considerably between one natural region and another.

The maternal mortality rate is estimated at 666 per 100,000 live births. The gross birth rate stands at 41 per cent and the overall fertility index at 5.7 children per woman of child-bearing age. The median age at marriage is 16 years for women aged between 25 and 49 years. According to the 1992 Health and Population Survey, an estimated 3 per cent of women of child-bearing age use contraception.

There have been large movements of people both within and across the country's borders. Internal migrants come mainly from Middle and Upper Guinea into Lower Guinea and the forest region of Guinea. In addition to returning Guinean expatriates, there has also been a massive influx of refugees from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, accounting for more than 800,000 persons at last count.

By the year 2000, 40 per cent of the population will be living in cities, a majority of them women and young persons.

Urban poverty is characterized by overcrowding and promiscuity, the scarcity and low quality of housing, irregular or non-existent supplies of water and electricity and unsanitary living conditions (poor management of waste water, sanitation and refuse collection). Women are worst affected by unhealthy conditions in urban centres.

1.3 Historical overview

The Republic of Guinea has a very rich history, which may best be understood if it is divided into five distinct phases.

The origin of the name "Guinea" is lost in the mists of time. Some experts say that when the first white men landed on Guinea's shores they met a group of women and asked them what the country was called. The women, who did not understand the question, are said to have replied: "We are women. Go and talk to the men." In Soussou, one of the coastal languages, the word "Guinea" means "women." This is how the first explorers are supposed to have given the country its name.

For as far back as the records go, the first populations would appear to have settled in the area of Guinea in the eleventh century, at the time of the dismemberment of the Ghanaian Empire. The Manding populations (Malinké, Toma and Guerzé) emigrated southwards, some as far as the forest regions, where they encountered the palaeonegritic populations (Kissi, Konigui, Bassari, Baga, and so on). With the fall of the Soussou Empire in the thirteenth century, there was migration towards the centre and the coast. The Peulh people arrived in the Fouta Djallon in the thirteenth century and began the process of converting the country to

Islam. The Djallonke emigrated from the coast to Upper Guinea, while the Soussou settled in Lower Guinea.

Guinea belongs to that region of West Africa where a number of famous empires, including the Ghanaian Empire, the Soussou Empire and the Sonhraï Empire, flourished between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. Niani, the capital of the Malian Empire, situated in the gold-rich region of Bouré, now lies within the territory of the Republic of Guinea.

A "thriving" trade in black slaves developed along Guinea's coasts during the sixteenth century. Boké, Boffa, Dubréka and Benty became renowned for dealing in "black gold." The petty kingdoms that were the successors of dismembered empires began to wage war with one another for control of the trade. Africa was weakened, and the way was left open for conquest.

Colonial conquest came first from the direction of Senegal, where, in 1854, Faidherbe had established the Compagnie des Tirailleurs Sénégalais and begun to carry out raids in the interior of Guinea. The colonial army met fierce resistance. Guinea gave no quarter in the famous wars led by Almamy Samory Toure, Almamy Bocar Biro Barry (the Battle of Porédoka), Almamy Alpha Yaya Diallo, Dinah Salifou, Koko Tolno, Zébéla Togba and Allo Téné.

However, the forces were unevenly balanced. In 1893, France established the colony of Guinea, previously known as the Rivière du Sud (Southern River), with Conakry as its capital.

Thus began 60 years of colonial rule characterized by repression, depersonalization and irresponsibility. The initially somewhat hesitant struggle against colonial rule gathered momentum after the Second World War. Trade unions and political parties (the African Block of Guinea, the Socialist Party of Guinea, the Democratic Party of Guinea-African Democratic Rally) were formed and coalesced to lead the country to independence.

The Democratic Party of Guinea acquitted itself with distinction during the anti-colonial struggle. Deputy Prime Minister Sékou Toure introduced a series of reforms in 1957 that paved the way for the proclamation of Guinean independence on 2 October 1958 following the historic rejection of a constitution which the French Republic had submitted for adoption by popular referendum on 28 September 1958.

From that moment on, France cut all ties with independent Guinea and refused to furnish it with assistance of any kind. In a decision which was to cause it many problems at the structural, technical, financial and human levels, Guinea turned to the socialist States of Europe and Africa.

The death of Sékou Toure on 26 March 1984 sparked off a series of leadership battles, which culminated in a military takeover, under the leadership of Colonel Lansana Conte, on 3 April 1984.

The new leadership's first historic act, in keeping with the takeover declaration, was to end Guinea's isolation by encouraging an estimated 2 million Guinean exiles to return to the country. This wave of returns led to the break-up of many families that had been formed outside of the country (women became separated from their husbands and children from their fathers).

The Republic of Guinea changed direction, embracing liberalism as its development model. Root and branch reforms were introduced at all levels. The military regime, led by the Military Committee of National Recovery until 1988, was replaced, in 1989, by a transitional government announcing its intention to introduce democracy. The Constitution (Basic Law) which was adopted by referendum in 1991 marked the end of the emergency regime (the Second Republic) and the beginning of the Third Republic. Forty-six political parties were formed following the introduction of political pluralism and eight candidates stood in the first ever multiparty presidential elections in 1993. General Lansana Conte was elected President of the Republic and the work of establishing new institutions began.

In 1995, 114 deputies were returned to the National Assembly. Ten of them were women. The Supreme Court and National Council of Communications were established.

Since then Guinea has been engaged in a process of democratization based on the liberal development model.

1.4 Economic overview

1.4.1 Agriculture

Agriculture provides employment for 80 per cent of the Guinean population, and accounts for 29 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Although Guinea's varied climate and topographical, pedological and hydrographic diversity endow it with vast agricultural potential, its resources have been poorly exploited and production has fallen over the last two decades. Indeed, unfavourable conditions for agricultural production have led to food shortages, rising imports of basic commodities (150,000 to 200,000 tonnes of rice per year), an exodus from rural areas and economic dependence on the mining sector.

1.4.2 Animal farming

Between 1988 and 1989, according to a Department of Agriculture and Animal Resources survey, Guinea had a total of 2 million head of cattle and an equal number of sheep and goats. Although cattle of the N'dama breed are trypano-tolerant, their productivity is low (1 to 2 litres of milk per day and 100 kilos of meat per year).

1.4.3 Fishing

Guinea's continental shelf is one of the largest in Africa and contains abundant halieutic resources. Although it has the potential to produce an estimated 160,000 tonnes of fish per annum, Guinea produces a mere 57,000 tonnes from both private and industrial fishing.

The number of private fishing vessels rose to 2,343 in 1995. The private sector, which supplies 60 per cent of the local market, produced 52,031 tonnes of fish in 1995, compared with 23,230 tonnes from the industrial sector. The Guinean Government is endeavouring to create the necessary conditions to raise output, through training, the development of infrastructure for fish preserving and the creation of a fishermen's cooperative credit scheme.

1.4.4 Forestry

Forestry plays an important role in the nation's economy, supplying virtually all fuel for domestic consumption (firewood, charcoal) and wood for production. Forest coverage is rapidly being eroded because of the need to supply Conakry and the other main cities with firewood and charcoal and because of inappropriate cultivation techniques (extensive slash-and-burn cultivation, uncontrolled bush fires, forest clearance, and so on) and illegal logging.

1.4.5 Mining

Guinea is one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of its mineral resources. Around one third of the world's reserves of bauxite are found in Guinea (National Directorate of Mining). In 1996, the total output of the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée alone was 12 million tonnes.

Guinea has the long-term potential to mine between 10 and 15 tonnes of gold per year. The average annual yield from the country's diamond reserves is estimated at 300,000 carats.

The Mount Nimba region contains one of the world's last remaining, high quality iron beds, proven to contain approximately 315,000,000 tonnes of top quality iron. Guinea also has reserves of minerals such as lead, zinc, silver, uranium, cobalt, nickel and platinum, as well as granite.

The country is currently preparing the ground for the systematic exploration and prospecting of all of its mining resources. However, the sector continues to be characterized by a high degree of concentration and dependence on foreign partnerships.

A number of companies in Guinea are run along mixed economy lines. They include Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (producing 12 million tonnes per annum), Office des Bauxites de Boké, Friguia (61,900 tonnes), Aredor, Aurifère de Guinée (1,092 kilograms), SBK, Ashantis Gold Field, Société Minière de Dinguiraye and SRDT.

1.4.6 Commerce

According to national accounting data, the wholesale and retail sectors realized an added value of 531 billion Guinean francs (GF), or 29 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 1990, putting them in first place in front of the mining sector, with a turnover of GF 413 billion, and the agricultural sector, with GF 374 billion. The dominant position of the commercial sector can be explained by the inefficiency of urban production structures, which have transformed the towns and cities into huge markets for, mainly imported, goods.

Eleven products account for two thirds of all of Guinea's imports: rice, sugar, flour, construction materials, oil, vehicles, mechanical equipment, petroleum, electrical goods, iron (including cast iron and steel) and pharmaceutical products.

1.4.7 Transport

The roads system consists of 14,000 kilometres of roads and tracks, mostly in very poor condition. Of these, 6,060 kilometres are made up of State highways,

1,500 kilometres rural highways, and the remainder of rural tracks. The national and international network covers approximately 6,000 kilometres.

The railway system is basically geared towards transporting mining products (bauxite and aluminium) to the ports of Conakry and Kamsar.

Guinea has two deep water harbours (Conakry and Kamsar) as well as a plethora of smaller coastal fishing ports and shipping harbours.

Finally, Guinea has its own international airport, a well-equipped national airport and a number of secondary airports (Boké, Labé, Kankan, Fria, Macenta and N'Zérékoré).

1.5 Political and legal system

The Constitution

The Constitution of Guinea was adopted on 23 December 1990 and constitutes the legal architecture of the State. It comprises 96 articles and its promulgation marked the beginning of the Third Republic. The Constitution regulates the exercise of power in Guinea and defines the freedoms, duties and fundamental rights of its citizens. It provides for the separation of power between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.

1.5.1 Executive power

Executive power is represented in the person of the President of the Republic. The President is elected by universal suffrage for a period of five years and appoints ministers, who are accountable to him. He also makes all civil and military appointments and runs the Administration.

Taking due account of their respective competences, the President consults the President of the National Assembly and the First President of the Supreme Court before appointing the Prime Minister. The President of the Republic heads the Council of Ministers and the Prime Minister presides over the weekly interministerial cabinet meeting.

1.5.2 Legislative power

The Transitional Council of National Recovery was established following the President's announcement, on 22 December 1985, of a vast programme of general policy measures. Its members are appointed by decree. The Council drafted the Constitution which was adopted by popular referendum and promulgated in 1991.

The Constitution and organic laws define the powers of the National Assembly, the legislative bodies which comprises 114 deputies, 10 of whom are women.

One third of National Assembly deputies are elected by majority vote on a single name ballot in one round of voting. Two thirds are elected by a national list vote. Article 48 of the Constitution stipulates that no one may stand for election to the Assembly, unless he or she is represented by a legally constituted political party. Deputies are elected for a period of five years in each case.

The National Assembly's principal function is to vote on legislation (organic laws and finance bills).

1.5.3 Judicial power

According to the Constitution, the judiciary is independent of the executive and legislative branches, and judicial power is exercised exclusively by the courts and tribunals. Magistrates, in the exercise of their functions, are subject only to the authority of the law. Sitting judges may not be removed from the bench under the conditions set forth by law. The President of the Republic appoints the members of the bench and consults the Supreme Council in the appointment of sitting judges (arts. 80 and 81).

Guinean justice is dispensed in accordance with the principle of two levels of jurisdiction. Pursuant to article 1 of Law No. L/98/014/CTRN of 16 June 1998, concerning reorganization of Guinea's judicial system, in order to create a judicial system that covers the entire territory of the Republic of Guinea, in addition to the Supreme Court, the following courts of ordinary law and special courts were established:

1.5.3.1 Courts of ordinary law

Two (2) courts of appeal
Eight (8) courts of the first instance
Twenty-six (26) justices of the peace

1.5.3.2. Special courts

The State Security Court
The High Court of Justice
The Military Tribunal.

It should be noted that some cases are settled by councils of elders operating in the villages and urban districts.

1.6 Trade union pluralism

Trade union pluralism is a fact of life in Guinea. Indeed, it would not be wrong to say that Guinea could be taken as a model for the sub-region in this particular regard, in so far as the trade union sector is the only sector which has survived unscathed since the declaration of independence. There are five trade unions in total: the Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs de Guinée (National Confederation of Guinean Workers), the Union Générale des Travailleurs de Guinée (General Union of Guinean Workers), the Organisation Nationale des Syndicats Libres de Guinée (National Organization of Free Trade Unions of Guinea), the Union Syndicale des Travailleurs de Guinée (the United Trade Union of Guinean Workers) and the Syndicat des Forces Ouvrières de Guinée (the Guinean Labour Union).

Part two
Analysis of Articles 1 to 16 of the Convention

I. Definition of Discrimination

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Although Guinea has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the legislator has yet to define discrimination in formal terms. However, equality between men and women is enshrined in the law in accordance with fundamental human rights' principles.

The Constitution of the Republic of Guinea was adopted by referendum on 23 December 1990 and promulgated by Decree No. 250/PRG/SGG/90 of 31 December 1990. Its preamble proclaims the equality of men and women before the law and the adherence of the people to the ideals, principles, rights and duties established in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

Under article 18 of the Constitution, the right to work is recognized for all. The State creates the necessary conditions for the exercise of this right.

No one can be harassed in his work on account of his or her sex, race, ethnicity or opinions. Every person has the right to belong to the trade union of his choice and to defend his or her rights through trade union activities. Every worker has the right to participate through his representatives in the determination of his working conditions. The right to strike is recognized.

From an economic perspective, women are assured access to land.

The Constitution prohibits discrimination against women and the law affirms equality between men and women in accordance with fundamental human rights' principles.

In terms of marital status, the law does discriminate, however, to the extent that it deems the husband to be the head of household with all the legal effects arising therefrom, including the right to choose the marital home.

In practice, social, cultural and economic inertia undermines the effective application of the law.

With regard to inheritance, article 483 of the Civil Code states that a widow receives an eighth of the total inheritance in the presence of children and ascendants of the first degree. This is discriminatory and manifestly prejudicial to women, in so far as it places them on the same footing as children and ascendants of the first

degree. The discrimination is all the greater, if the woman also has to compete with several other wives.

Articles 484 and 485 of the Code deal with inheritance by a childless widow in the presence of a child heir or of other widows with children of the deceased. Her portion is calculated on the basis of every five years of a marriage based on dignity and devotion.

This provision is a piece of positive discrimination in so far as it is widely ignored.

II. Legislative measures for the elimination of discrimination

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

Article 8 of the Constitution specifies that all human beings are equal before the law and that men and women are accorded the same rights. No one may be accorded privileges or suffer disadvantage on account of his or her birth, race, ethnicity, language, political, philosophical or religious beliefs or opinions.

However, the equality provided for under the Constitution does not exist in effect. In practice, very high rates of female poverty and illiteracy impede the effective enjoyment by women of their rights. Measures taken to remedy this situation are outlined here below.

1. By Decree No. 068/PRG/SGG/92 of 9 March 1992 the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Women and Childhood was established with responsibility for assuring the social protection and economic advancement of women.

2. In January 1998, the Directorate for the Promotion of Women set up its own division for the protection of women's rights.

3. By Decree No. 97/141/PRG/SGG of 19 June 1997 legal aid centres were set up to disseminate information about and explain women's rights to the public.

4. Several non-governmental organizations for the defence and promotion of women's rights have been established.

3. The Association of Women Lawyers of Guinea and the Justice, Aid and Development Association both work to make laws and legal texts on women's rights understandable to the public.

4. The Coordinating Body of Guinean Women's Non-Governmental Organizations coordinates the activities of non-governmental organizations and disseminates knowledge about women's rights via its listening centres.

5. The Cell against Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children conducts country-wide campaigns aimed at raising awareness about

female excision and infibulation. It has carried out a survey and produced a film on the subject.

6. The Association of Guinean Women against Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) runs education campaigns and workshops on sexually transmitted diseases.

7. The Guinean Union of Women Formerly from Rufisque and the Guinean Association of Retired Women Teacher Trainers are actively involved in educating young women. They have established a school where young women who have not been able to complete their education can acquire skills in needlework, embroidery, hairdressing and literacy.

8. The Guinean Association for the Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts concerns itself with the social rehabilitation of drug addicts who receive treatment at its clinic in the university hospital of Donka (Conakry).

9. The Guinean Association of Women for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons offers various kinds of vocational training for persons with disabilities.

10. In order to inject energy into the work of the legal aid centres, training has been given to paralegals.

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women; (art. 2 of the Convention)

The Republic of Guinea has taken appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women. Guinea's Penal Code contains the following provisions and sanctions:

Article 306

"Abortion consists of the use of devices or substances whose purpose is to induce the premature expulsion of the foetus or, more generally, the artificial interruption of the pregnancy."

Article 307

"Any person who, by means of food, beverages, medicine, manipulation, violence or any other method, save in the cases provided for by law for reasons of health, procures or seeks to procure an abortion for a woman who is pregnant or assumed so to be, whether with or without her consent, shall be punished by a term of one to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs or to one of these two penalties.

Any woman who procures an abortion for herself or agrees to the use of methods designed or administered for that purpose shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of between 16 days and one month and a fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs.

Save as provided under the first paragraph of this article, any doctor, health official, midwife, surgeon, dentist, pharmacist, student, pharmacy assistant, herbalist, truss maker, purveyor of surgical instruments, nurse, masseur or masseuse who proffers advice or facilitates or practices methods designed to procure an

abortion shall be subject to the penalties set forth under the first and second paragraphs of this same article.

In addition, offenders shall be suspended from exercising their profession for a period of five years, or shall be disbarred for life.

Any person who defies an order prohibiting him or her from exercising his or her profession pursuant to the provisions of the preceding paragraph shall face between six months and two years in prison and a fine of 100,000 to 500,000 Guinean Francs, or one of these penalties.

Where the culprit is one of the persons identified in the third paragraph of this article, it will not be possible to hand down a suspended sentence."

Article 308

"Interruption of pregnancy shall not constitute an offence where there is a need to safeguard the life of a mother which is at grave risk, or in cases of premature pregnancy, rape, incest or the serious illness of the unborn child.

In such cases, permission must be obtained from a board of specialized physicians whose decision must be rendered in a report explaining the reasons therefor.

The operation may be carried out by no one other than a doctor and in a public or private institution which is equipped to perform voluntary interruption of pregnancy."

Article 353

"The following persons shall be subject to a penalty of three months to one year in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Guinean francs or to one of these two penalties:

1. A mother or father who abandons the family home for no good reason for a period of over two months, thereby failing to fulfil part or all of his or her moral or material obligations;

2. A husband who voluntarily abandons his wife for no good reason for a period of over two months, knowing her to be pregnant;

3. Mothers and fathers who, through ill-treatment, harmful examples of drunkenness or impropriety, or failure to provide due care, gravely compromise the safety or morals of their children.

Proceedings may be taken in connection with the offences to which paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article refer only if the spouse remaining in the family home lodges an official complaint. Such person may choose to bring a halt to the proceedings or to the effects of a sentence of guilt.

"Complaints may be lodged by any interested party in connection with the offences under paragraph 3 here above."

Article 354

"A fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs shall be levied against any person who, in defiance of an enforceable legal instrument or judicial decision sentencing

him to pay an allowance for necessaries to his spouse, ascendants and descendants, voluntarily fails to pay, for a period of over two months, the full amount of the allowances specified in the decision or the entire sum of the allowance for necessaries.

Failure to make payment shall be assumed to be voluntary in the absence of any evidence to the contrary.

Insolvency arising out of habitual misconduct, indolence or drunkenness shall in no wise be taken as a valid reason for pardoning a debtor.

The court competent to deal with the offences to which this article refers shall be the court located in the place of domicile or residence of the person entitled to the allowance or allowances.

In the case of recidivism, a prison sentence shall always be imposed."

Article 322

"Indecent assault shall mean any indecent act perpetrated directly and intentionally against another person, whether it be consummated or attempted with or without the use of violence."

Article 323

"Any indecent act consummated or attempted without the use of violence against a child of either sex aged below the age of 13 shall be subject to a penalty of five to 10 years' imprisonment.

The same penalty shall apply to any indecent act which an ascendant perpetrates against a minor, even if the minor is over 13 years of age, but has not been emancipated by marriage."

Article 324

"Any indecent act consummated or attempted with violence against a child of less than 13, regardless of that child's sex, shall be subject to a penalty of five to 10 years' imprisonment.

If the offender is the minor's ascendant, a person with authority over him or her, or has been assisted in the commission of the crime by one or more persons, the penalty shall be five to 20 years' imprisonment.

If the offence also involves the involuntary detention of the minor, the penalty shall, regardless of the minor's sex, be that set forth under the preceding paragraph."

Article 325

"Any indecent or unnatural act committed with an individual of the same sex shall be subject to a penalty of six months to three years' imprisonment and a fine of between 100,000 and 1,000,000 Guinean francs.

If the act is committed with a minor of under 21 years of age, the maximum penalty shall always be imposed.

If the act is consummated or attempted with the use of violence, the offender shall face a penalty of five to 10 years in prison."

Article 359

"A sentence of two months to one year in prison and a fine of 100,000 to 1,000,000 Guinean francs, or one of these two penalties, shall be imposed upon any person who voluntarily violates the privacy of others using the following means:

1. Listening to, recording or transmitting by means of any device the words spoken by an individual in a private place, without that person's consent;

2. Capturing or transmitting by means of any device the image of a person who is in a private place, without that person's consent.

Where the actions referred to in the present article are carried out in the full view and hearing of participants at a meeting, such persons shall be assumed to have given their consent."

Article 360

"The penalties stipulated in the preceding article shall be imposed upon any person who knowingly keeps, discloses or causes to be disclosed to the public or to a third party, or who publicly or otherwise uses any recording or document obtained by the means specified in the preceding article.

In the case of publication, proceedings shall be instituted in accordance with the provisions of Law No. L/91/005/CTRN of 23 December 1991, concerning freedom of the press, radio, television and communications in general.

The offence shall exist from the moment in which publication is effected, received or detected in Guinea."

Article 361

"The penalties set forth in the preceding article shall be imposed upon any person who knowingly publishes by any means a montage in which the words or image of a person are used without that person's consent, where it is not obvious that the piece is a montage and no express mention is made to that effect.

Proceedings shall be taken in the conditions set forth under the preceding article."

Article 362

"Any person found guilty of giving false testimony in a criminal case, whether against or on behalf of a defendant, shall be sentenced to five to 10 years in prison.

If the defendant is sentenced to a penalty that is higher than a fixed term of imprisonment, the same such penalty shall be applied to the witness who gave false testimony against him or her."

Article 363

"Any person who gives false testimony in a case involving a minor offence, whether against or on behalf of a defendant, shall be sentenced to two to five years in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Guinean francs.

If the defendant is sentenced to more than five years' imprisonment, the same penalty shall be imposed upon the witness who gave false testimony against him."

Article 364

"Any person found guilty of giving false testimony in an ordinary police matter, whether against or on behalf of a defendant, shall be sentenced to one to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 Guinean francs.

In the latter two cases, offenders may, in addition, be deprived of the rights referred to in article 37 of this Code for a period of no less than five and no more than 10 years from the date on which sentence is imposed, and may face local banishment (interdiction du séjour) for the same number of years."

Article 365

"In all other matters, a person found guilty of giving false testimony shall face a prison sentence of one to three years and a fine of 50,000 to 150,000 Guinean francs. He may also face the additional penalties provided for under the preceding article."

Article 198

"Where a civil servant, public official, police officer, government or police representative or official, enforcer of warrants or court orders, police chief or his subordinate uses or orders the use of violence against others for no legitimate reason in the performance of or while performing his duties, he shall face a penalty commensurate with the nature and seriousness of the said acts of violence, the penalty rising in accordance with the rules stipulated in article 208 hereunder."

Article 199

"Any civil servant, police officer or government representative, regardless of his or her status or grade, who requests or orders or causes to be requested or ordered the intervention or deployment of law enforcement officials in order to prevent the application of a law, the collection of a legal tax or the execution of either a judicial decision or fine or of any other order emanating from a legitimate authority, shall be sentenced to two to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 to 500,000 Guinean francs.

If such request or order is carried out, the penalty shall be 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 1,000,000 Guinean francs."

Article 200

"The penalties set forth in article 199 shall not apply to civil servants or representatives who were acting on orders from their superiors, to the extent that the said superiors issued the orders in connection with matters that come under their jurisdiction and that involve a hierarchical duty of obedience. In such cases, the aforementioned penalties shall be imposed upon the superiors who first issued the said orders."

Article 201

"If other offences which are punishable by higher penalties than those set forth in article 199 are committed in the execution of the said orders or requests, those higher penalties shall be imposed upon civil servants, police officers or

representatives found guilty of having given the orders or having made the requests."

Article 202

"Any judge, court, administrative agent or administrative authority that refuses to comply with a duty to render justice to parties for any reason whatsoever, including the silence or obscurity of the law, and persists in such refusal after receiving a warning or injunction from a higher authority, may face prosecution and a fine of 50,000 to 300,000 Guinean francs as well as disbarment from public service for a period of five to 20 years."

Article 203

"Any civil servant, government or police official or police chief or officer who, in that capacity, enters the home of a citizen against that person's will and without observing the legal formalities, save in the cases provided for by law, shall be sentenced to 16 days' to one year imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 300,000 Guinean francs. This shall be without prejudice to the provisions of article 128, paragraph 1.

Any person who uses threats or violence to gain entry to the home or residence of a citizen against that citizen's clearly expressed wishes shall be sentenced to 16 days' to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 200,000 Guinean francs.

The penalties provided for under the preceding paragraphs shall be doubled where:

(a) The offence occured during the night;

(b) The offence was accompanied by violence, threats or assault and battery;

(c) The perpetrator was carrying a concealed or unconcealed weapon or using a fictitious name, title or order issued by a legitimate authority;

(d) The offence was committed by a group of two or more persons.

Proceedings cannot be taken unless the victim files a formal complaint."

Article 204

"The removal or opening by or with the help of a government or post office official or agent of a letter entrusted to the postal service shall be subject to a penalty of three months' to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 300,000 Guinean francs. The offender shall be barred from public office or employment for a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 years.

In addition to the cases provided for under the first paragraph of this article, the malicious removal or opening of correspondence addressed to third parties shall be subject to a penalty of 16 days to one year in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 300,000 Guinean francs, or to one of the two penalties."

Article 321

"Any act of sexual penetration of any nature whatsoever which is perpetrated against another person with the use of violence, constraint or surprise constitutes rape.

The penalty for rape is five to 10 years' imprisonment.

Such penalty shall be increased to 10 to 20 years, if the rape is perpetrated against a person who is particularly vulnerable on account of pregnancy, illness, infirmity or a physical or mental disability, or against a minor aged below 14 years, or under armed threat, or by two or more assailants or accomplices, or by a legitimate, natural or adoptive ascendant of the victim, or by a person who has abused the authority which his role confers upon him.

The penalty for attempted rape shall be the same as for actual rape."

Article 371

"Defamation is any allegation or accusation which impugns the honour or good name of the person or group against whom it is levelled.

Abuse is any insulting expression, disparaging term or term of invective which does not include the imputation of any specific act."

Article 372

"The penalty for defaming the good name of the Civil Service, constituent bodies, the army, and the courts or tribunals by means of speeches, shouting or threats in a public place, at a public meeting or in written material sold, distributed, offered for sale or exhibited in a public place or at a meeting or by any means other than through the press shall be a term of imprisonment of one month to one year and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Guinean francs, or one of these two penalties.

The same penalties shall apply to defamation of the good name of members of ministerial departments or the National Assembly or of civil servants, public representatives, agents or citizens engaged in public service or holding public office, or of jury members or witnesses in connection with the latters' testimony."

Article 373

"The following penalties shall be imposed in the case of abuse perpetrated in the same manner:

(1) Sixteen days to six months in prison and fine of 50,000 to 1,000,000 Guinean francs, or one of these two penalties, where the offence is committed against the bodies or persons designated in article 372.

(2) Sixteen days to three months in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Guinean francs, or one of these two penalties, where the offence is committed against private individuals.

If the abuse does not occur in public, the penalty shall be one to 15 days in prison and a fine of 10,000 to 15,000 Guinean francs."

In practice, notwithstanding the above provisions of criminal law, women continue to be the victims of all kinds of violence. The phenomenon is difficult to

control, because women are reluctant to file formal complaints even when they have been beaten, subjected to abuse or raped. They are often too ashamed to expose themselves or their husbands to public scrutiny.

Experience shows that in the rare instances where a woman does lodge a formal complaint, the case will end in divorce. Sexual harassment is quite common, but is not covered by Guinean law. More needs to be done to fill this lacuna.

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination; (art. 2 of the Convention)

Article 9 of the Republic of Guinea's Constitution guarantees the right of all citizens to appear before a judge and present a defence. The article provides that no one shall be arrested, detained or sentenced for reasons or following any procedure other than due process. Everyone has the indefeasible right to appear before a judge to assert his or her rights before the State and its agents. All citizens have a right to a just and fair trial that guarantees them the right to present a defence.

The Constitution establishes the penalties to be applied in accordance with the gravity of the offence committed. In order to guarantee citizens access to justice, the Code of Civil, Economic and Administrative Procedure was instituted by Decree No. 100/PRG/SGG of 16 June 1998. Articles 550 and 649 of the Code provide for legal aid in the case of indigence.

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation; (art. 2 of the Convention)

Since independence, the Government of Guinea has demonstrated its unwavering political commitment to the total emancipation of women. Its political will needs to be sustained by preventive measures which have prescriptive force.

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise; (art. 2 of the Convention)

As part of its programme of administrative decentralization, Guinea has set up municipal (Conakry), prefectoral and regional offices whose principal function is to implement policies for the advancement of women, working in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and focusing in particular on disseminating information about women's rights.

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women; (art. 2 of the Convention)

Article 294 of Guinea's former Penal Code, adopted in June 1975, clearly discriminated against women by stipulating that a husband was guilty of adultery only if he maintained his concubine in the marital home, whereas the same charge would apply to a wife even in an isolated incident.

The Guinean legislator, conscious of the discriminatory nature of this infamous piece of legislation, rectified the situation by redefining the elements that constitute the act of adultery under the new Penal Code.

Paragraph 1 of article 324 of the Civil Code, which was promulgated on 1 January 1996, discriminates against women by attributing the role of head of household to the husband. Its provisions should be amended in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women. (art. 2 of the Convention)

Amendments should be made to the following articles of the Civil Code:

- Article 359, concerning custody of children in the case of divorce;
- Article 396, which grants the husband the right to exercise paternal authority in the education of children.

The words "paternal authority" should be replaced with the words "parental authority" which should be exercised jointly by both spouses.

A draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law has been elaborated and submitted to the competent authorities for adoption.

III. Advancement of women

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

Under the First Republic, which lasted from 1958 to 1984, the national mechanism for the advancement of women was a special section of the ruling Democratic Party of Guinea, Guinea's only political party. The Guinean Women's Revolutionary Union was run by a national women's committee comprised of 13 members.

The political determination of the leaders of the First Republic engendered a number of notable successes with regard to the advancement of women, including the appointment of women to positions as ambassadors, regional governors, managers of State enterprises, mayors, district chiefs and members of specialized army corps; the banning of polygamy; efforts to achieve parity in school enrolment rates and to keep pregnant girls in the school system; and Guinea's signing and ratification of all international conventions and treaties concerning women's civil, political, economic and human rights of women, without making any reservations thereto.

3.1 Government mechanisms

In 1992, the Guinean Government established the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Women, the first government body ever to be created at the national level for the specific purpose of encouraging, coordinating and regulating activities aimed at the social, economic, political and cultural development of women. In 1994, the Secretariat of State was elevated to the status of Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Childhood. In July 1996, its remit was extended to include social affairs under its new title, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood. The Ministry, which was established by Decree No. 96/111/PRG/SGG of 29 August 1996, has the following functions:

1. To design, coordinate, implement and monitor government policy as it relates to social affairs and the advancement of women and children and to that end to:

(a) Elaborate and monitor the implementation of social affairs legislation and regulations;

(b) Design and implement social development and social protection policy;

(c) Provide assistance to the poor and other vulnerable groups in society;

(d) Make provision for and protect vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, through the development of appropriate support structures;

(e) Identify and mobilize the technical, material and financial resources needed for programmes and projects designed by associations, women's groups and organizations working on behalf of children.

The Government has adopted a national policy for the advancement of women, based on the four strategic objectives described here below.

1. To improve the legal framework with a view to ensuring the advancement of women;

2. To support the economic advancement of women;

3. To strengthen the family, social and cultural role of women and improve their status in society;

4. To reinforce institutional support for the advancement of women.

The policy is based on a candid analysis of the social and economic situation of Guinean women, who make up 51.3 per cent of the population. Seventy-five per cent of women live in rural areas and over half of all women who live in cities live in the capital. According to the 1992 Population and Health Survey, the cohort fertility rate is seven children per women. In spite of numerous pregnancies, only 2 to 3 per cent of women use modern contraceptives.

The law does not discriminate against women in any way as regards access to education, employment, property and security. The real issue for Guinean women is ensuring that their rights are recognized and respected. According to the Department of Statistics of the National Directorate of Further Education, in the academic year 1996 to 1997, out of a total of 8,228 students, 871, or 10.58 per cent, were women.

Girls account for 36 per cent of all students in education. Almost all women engaged in economic activities are illiterate: 78 per cent compared with a figure of

56 per cent among men. Low levels of academic achievement among girls also mean that women are also under-represented in the public sector and in the modern production and the formal sectors. Women account for 22 per cent of all public sector employees.

On the other hand, Guinean women do play an economic role in the agricultural sector, where they are responsible for 80 per cent of all food production and 90 per cent of transformation and marketing activities. Women in urban and semi-urban areas tend to be employed in small-scale extraction industries (salt, oil), the catering industry or in dyeing, soap production, dressmaking, embroidery and hairdressing. Women set up economic groupings and associations to carry out production and increase their earnings.

It is this information that was used to help formulate the four strategic objectives on which the policy for the advancement of women adopted by the Government in December 1996 was based. The policy was translated into the 1997-2001 Plan of Action, consisting of six priority areas covering the 12 areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, and taking account of disabled and marginalized women.

The Plan of Action was in turn incorporated into the Gender and Development Framework Programme for Guinea, a programme inspired by the National Human Development Programme which seeks to reduce inequality between men and women by broadening the range of opportunities and options offered to every citizen.

3.2 Women with disabilities

In most communities, disabled persons are seen as fragile beings who are unable to work and who have to live off charity. This perception impedes the social and professional integration of disabled persons in general and of disabled women in particular.

Under the First Republic, the policy of care for the disabled worked encouraged huge numbers of persons to move to the capital, where a solidarity centre had been built to accommodate them.

Under the Second Republic, the Government and non-governmental organizations worked to progressively replace the policy of assistance with a programme aimed at providing training to and ensuring the effective rehabilitation of disabled persons in the area of productive employment.

While some progress has been achieved, it has been modest compared to the many problems that have yet to be overcome. Many disabled women have access to primary health care services, essential medicines and family planning advice. They have also benefited from programmes providing for the installation of hydraulic systems in villages, the upgrading of housing, and training in various production techniques (smoking of fish, soap production, oil extraction and so on).

Moreover, the Government, through the Guinean Association for the Training and Social Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has established a revolving credit scheme designed to support start-up projects submitted by disabled persons who have gone through remunerative projects training. Credit is made available

through a project bank, which operates from within the Office for the Promotion of Private Investment.

An estimated 750,000 Guineans, or 10 per cent of the population, suffer from a physical, sensorial or mental handicap. Almost 80 per cent of disabled persons live in cities; 56 per cent of them are women and of these 22 per cent are single at the age of 25. As many as 45.9 per cent of disabled persons are aged below 40. Ninety-five per cent of disabled women are illiterate, as against 80 per cent of disabled men. The measures taken by the Government in this area are outlined below.

- Functional literacy training for disabled women has been promoted;
- An office has been set up to support disabled women who have benefited from training;
- Community centres have been established to offer disabled women a basic education;
- Efforts have been made to reinforce concertation at the sub-regional, regional and international levels on behalf of disabled women;
- The training provided to disabled women in production methods and management techniques has been improved, and women with disabilities have been encouraged to participate in political and trade union movements;
- A credit and savings scheme has been set up;
- Efforts to promote community-based reintegration have been intensified;
- A quota system has been introduced requiring employers to take on a certain number of women with disabilities.

The real solution to the problem of the social and professional rehabilitation of disabled women, however, lies in community-based reintegration, an approach which has the advantage of countering the massive influx of disabled persons into the cities and of offering support to disabled persons in their own environment.

3.3 Gender and Development Framework Programme

The Gender and Development Framework Programme covers the priority areas identified in the policy for the advancement of women and priority Plan of Action for 1997-2001. It comprises five main elements:

- Gender, rights and power;
- Gender, the economy and the eradication of poverty;
- Gender, education, training and literacy;
- Gender, health and population;
- Strengthening institutional mechanisms.

One quarter of the financial resources required for the Programme, valued at a total of 27 billion Guinean francs, has been raised.

The National Directorate for the Promotion of Women oversees the implementation of Guinea's national policy for the advancement of women, drawing on the support of three departments which are responsible respectively for women's

economic development, training and education, and the promotion of women's rights.

The Directorate has an integrated network covering the entire country. Each of the seven administrative regions has its own inspectorate of social affairs and the promotion of women and childhood, as do all of the prefectures.

Conakry's five urban districts each have a municipal department for the promotion of women.

In view of the cross-cutting nature of questions relating to the advancement of women, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood has focal points in all ministerial departments.

There is a women's self-help centre in every prefecture in the country. The centres are open to women's groups and to girls who have no education. They can go there to take courses which consist of 11 modules and cover subjects such as arithmetic, reading, writing, home economy, family planning, nutritional and environmental education, functional literacy and so on.

3.4 Achievements and future prospects of women's self-help centres

Guinea's centres for the promotion of women, which had been set up in 1972, were turned into women's self-help centres in 1995 with a view to revitalizing their work and to helping to improve women's lives and social status.

Results and impact

Consistent with the mandate which the National Revolution Council had given them, the centres for the promotion of women did make some contribution to the emancipation of Guinean women.

They helped to strengthen the economic position of women by providing them with access to sectors such as dressmaking, embroidery and dyeing. In the absence of reliable statistical information, it is difficult to say how many young women were trained, but some data do suggest that the numbers were not insignificant. Beginning in 1981, the centre at Cameroun, one of 30 throughout the country, held a total of nine graduation ceremonies, each with an average of 50 young women who had acquired expertise in dressmaking and embroidery.

Women graduates from the centre now run the majority of dressmaking and embroidery workshops in Conakry and the regions of the interior.

Moreover, the centres, which originally had the legal status of State-owned enterprises, supplied garments to schools, educational establishments and homes.

At the social level, the centres helped to teach women literacy. Many women who received a basic education (reading, writing and arithmetic) at the centres are currently active members of women's groupings throughout the country. By strengthening social cohesion and instilling a spirit of enterprise, the centres opened the door for greater and more effective participation by Guinean women in their communities, helping to gain recognition for the economic role that they play.

Constraints and prospects

The absence of statistical data and information about the objectives that were set at the outset make it difficult to evaluate the centres' activities with a view to providing an overall appraisal of their work.

Their dual function (as centres both for the promotion of women and for production) negatively affected their performance and ability to make the maximum impact.

However, these failings cannot be allowed to obscure the contribution which they made to the process of integration of Guinean women.

With the change of political regime in 1984, however, over half of the centres closed down.

When the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Women was established in 1994, a plan was conceived to alter the status of the centres, in keeping with Guinea's new policy of economic liberalism.

A number of studies were carried out with the assistance of the World Bank to define specific objectives and a clearer role for these bodies, taking into account the new economic, political and social climate.

In the future, the women's self-help centres will participate in the implementation of diverse elements of national policy for the advancement of women.

Their training role will be strengthened in the following areas of economic activity:

- Support for the formation of economic groupings;
- Marketing of goods produced by women's enterprises;
- Dissemination of information about economic opportunities and markets;
- Encouragement of the habit of saving;
- Technology training.

Five legal aid centres have been set up in the municipalities of Conakry to strengthen the legal framework for the protection and promotion of women's rights, in keeping with one of the objectives of national policy for the advancement of women. The legal aid centres are responsible for carrying out the following work:

- Monitoring and disseminating laws, regulatory texts and international legal instruments which promote the interests of women and the girl child in Guinea;
- Listening to women and providing women in difficulty, and, in particular, illiterate women, with practical advice on how to compile dossiers so as to enable them to assert their rights vis-à-vis the public authorities when these rights have been violated;
- Creating a database of cases relating to violations of women's rights to include information on the outcome of action taken;
- Training paralegals to explain women's rights to the public;

- Raising the awareness of and submitting questions to the authorities and members of civil society that are concerned with the advancement of women.

3.5 Non-governmental mechanisms

In his Address to the Nation on 22 December 1985, the Head of State proposed the adoption of a new social policy based on traditional forms of solidarity.

The change in direction held out new hope of greater participation by the population. The atmosphere of greater openness encouraged the formation of various types of organization (non-governmental organizations, local development associations, economic groupings and cooperative societies).

In order to ensure effective partnership between the social actors, the Guinean Government set up two departments, the Department for the Coordination of the Activities of Non-governmental Organizations and the National Department of Technical Assistance for Cooperative Societies, with responsibility for promoting and monitoring the activities of these groups.

During the most recent restructuring of ministerial departments in March 1997, these two departments were merged to become, pursuant to Decree No. D/97/126/PRG/SGG, the National Department of Technical Assistance for Cooperative Societies and Coordination of the Activities of Non-governmental Organizations, which reports to the Ministry of the Interior and of Decentralization.

According to the Department, between 1986 and 1997 Guinea has a total of 50 approved women's non-governmental organizations working in the areas of education, health, social work, support for women's groupings and promotion of income-generating activities (dressmaking, embroidery, dyeing, market gardening and research).

Most of the organizations have joined the Coordinating Body of Guinean Women's Non-governmental Organizations.

Established in 1992, the Coordinating Body has 33 members. It has set up networks in the administrative regions of Kindia, Mamou, Labé, Kankan, Boké, Faranah and N'Zérékoré in order to ensure that field activities are more effectively coordinated. Its headquarters are located in the special zone of Conakry.

The organization's mission is to help Guinean women play their part in development, and to improve the quality of citizens' lives. To that end, it encourages joint decision-making and exchanges of ideas and information between non-governmental organizations and other entities working in the field.

It helps to improve the institutional capacities of its members and lobbies to enhance the status of women. The organization has opened a listening centre at N'Zérékoré (in the forest region of Guinea) and has launched several initiatives designed to disseminate information about women's rights and encourage compliance with legislation that promotes equity.

Some of its activities are listed here below.

- A seminar radio on the broadcasting of messages on women's rights was held in Kindia for women presenters of rural and community radio. Messages were designed, produced and broadcast on the subjects of marriage, divorce and violence against women.

– Two training workshops are due to be held for personnel involved in explaining the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Paralegals have been selected for training and will travel throughout the seven administrative regions to disseminate information about the Convention on a wide scale and in cooperation with local associate magistrates and partners.

3.6 Village groupings and cooperatives

A village or district grouping is a voluntary association of producers or rural consumers with common economic and social interests.

A cooperative is a society of individuals whose objective is to promote the economic and social interests of its members through cooperation.

Ordinance No. 005/PRG/SGG/88, establishing the general legal framework for the organization of pre-cooperative and cooperative groups in the Republic of Guinea, sets forth the laws and regulations applicable to the establishment of village and district groupings, local village unions and cooperative societies. The ordinance applies to both sexes.

Guinean law provides that a cooperative society can only be created after its members have formed an economic grouping. The National Department of Technical Assistance to Cooperative Societies and Coordination of the Activities of Non-governmental Organizations has offices at the prefectoral level which transmit files back to the Department for official approval. In order to secure accreditation, a grouping must submit an activity report covering covers a period of at least one year.

The resources available to groupings and cooperatives often amount to little more than the sum total of subscriptions. In groupings of very poor women, these can be very modest indeed.

Since voluntarism is the norm, rural groups have no paid employees or operating budgets. Their greatest difficulty is coming up with a project idea and finding a backer to finance it.

3.7 Women's trade union associations

The Guinean women's trade union movement has existed ever since the First Republic.

The National Committee of Guinean Working Women was reconstituted at the conference of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity in 1986.

The committee, which was created on 28 May 1985, is one of the specialized committees of the National Confederation of Workers.

Thanks to energetic awareness-raising activities among women workers, it has successfully organized through Guinea's decentralized structures, reaching out to women even at the local level (public, private, mixed and informal sectors).

In all branches of social and professional life, women are becoming organized and are beginning to make their voice heard.

3.8 Urban women

Urban women do not work in agriculture, but either work for small and medium-sized enterprises or for themselves.

Women in the second category have set up most of Guinea's non-governmental organizations, including the Guinean Business Women's Group and the Association of Guinean Women Entrepreneurs.

3.9 Religious associations

Religious associations seek to spread the faith through training, awareness raising and education of young persons and adults. They provide assistance and charity to the poor and the sick, and shelter to abandoned children and orphans.

In spite of education campaigns and greater self-awareness among women, social, cultural, economic, legal and institutional obstacles inertia continues to impede the full development of the associative movement.

IV. Temporary special measures

Article 4

(1) Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

According to the most recent census, the population of the Republic of Guinea stood at 7,164,983 in 1996, of whom 51.3 per cent were women. A total of 53.3 per cent of women contribute to the economy, compared with a figure of 46.7 per cent for the population as a whole. Women bear much of the responsibility for educating children, participate in household duties and undertake 80 per cent of all food production. They are also active in the commercial and informal sectors.

In spite of everything that has been done in recent years, the situation of women continues to give grave cause for concern. The fact that the illiteracy rate among women stands at 85 per cent, compared with 62 per cent among men, demonstrates the disparity between the proportion of the population represented by women and their level of academic achievement. If education for women were assured, the girl child would be able to acquire knowledge and specific skills in all areas of national life and women would have access to skills that would enable them to realize their full potential, including their emancipation and social and professional integration.

Some of the special measures taken to remedy the situation are outlined here below.

- In 1995, all female high school graduates were assured entry to university.
- When it comes to offering a university place or a study grant, preference is given to equally qualified female candidates.

- Recommendations concerning encouragement of female students to study scientific subjects and technical training courses have been implemented.

- An experimental programme called Femme, Science et Technique (Women, Science and Technology), financed by the Canadian Government, encourages female students to study technical subjects.

- Associations and national non-governmental organizations have been set up to carry out activities and training in areas such as maternal and infant health, family planning, protection of the environment, water and sanitation, functional literacy training and so on.

These training sessions provide information, education and communications skills for women in literacy centres and groupings.

- In 1991 an equity committee was established under the auspices of the Department of Education for the purpose of promoting the interests of the girl child.

- A coordinating body for women's non-governmental organizations has been established.

- Legal texts have been reviewed and changes made to provisions that discriminate against girls at school (with the amendment of Circular No. 1720 which provided for the automatic expulsion of any school girl found to be pregnant).

- Discriminatory stereotypes have been removed from school curricula and textbooks.

(2) Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory. (art. 4 of the Convention)

Guinea has taken special measures to protect women. The Labour Code provides for a period of maternity leave that begins six weeks before and ends eight weeks after delivery. All public and private companies allow women a break of one hour per day for breastfeeding, the timing to be decided at the mother's convenience.

The Department of Education no longer expels under-age mothers, but offers them sabbatical leave. There is also a degree of flexibility in the professional environment. The right to health is guaranteed under article 15 of the Constitution.

Through the Ministry of Health, women can avail themselves of affordable pre- and post-natal care and such services as assistance with delivery, vaccination and family planning.

In terms of special temporary measures, it should also be recalled that Guinean women influenced the course of Guinean history in the struggle to end the violation of economic rights caused by a ban on trade within the country.

It was thanks to pressure from women that the First Republic removed commercial barriers and liberalized the commercial sector in which women are actively employed.

National Women's Day was inaugurated by the Second Republic on 27 August 1985.

These days, which are sometimes marked by an entire week of activities, are held to promote and evaluate programmes and projects devised by the Government, non-governmental organizations and development partners for the purpose of ensuring the effective advancement of women in Guinea.

The fact that celebrations are undertaken both in the capital and elsewhere helps to broaden their impact.

The mass media play a very important role in the areas of information, education and communication, by developing information campaigns in Guinea's national languages and helping to enhance the status of women's work.

Women's Day programmes are generally designed to support women working in various types of activity in the field.

On 27 August 1998, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood introduced peripatetic celebrations as a way of reaching out to rural women. The administrative region of Kankan, for example, has hosted national Women's Day celebrations.

This strategy has the advantage of underlining both the progress that has been made and the practical obstacles that prevent the implementation women's policies on the ground.

V. Stereotypes and prejudices

Article 5

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

5.1 Women and culture

The inhabitants of Guinea are a diverse people, in keeping with their differing regional, geographical, social, cultural and economic circumstances. Observers agree that there are slight differences between the way that women experience life, depending on whether they live in the Fouta Djallon or in the forest region of Guinea, the latter according women a relatively higher social status.

However, in spite of the apparent differences in their daily lives, relations between the sexes in the Republic of Guinea, as in other parts of the former Manding Empire, are governed by social rules which are heavily biased in favour of men.

While differing regional, geographical, social, cultural and economic factors may influence the social and cultural norms and values which determine the status, roles and responsibilities of women and men, there is always a direct correlation between a woman's age and the opportunities she has to participate in joint decision-making, particularly at the community level.

Since the development process is inextricably bound to the social and cultural context, this form of discrimination, which institutionalises inequality between men and women, has swiftly led to the marginalization of women, particularly as beneficiaries of development initiatives.

The many levels at which social taboos operate and the multifaceted distinctions women (class, geography, location, aspirations, local culture and so on) that characterize the heterogeneous group represented by Guinean shape the way in which different woman experience oppression.

While there is no consensus as to what status African women enjoyed during the pre-colonial period, there is agreement among researchers and historians of the oral tradition in Guinea and other parts of the continent that the status of women was sharply undermined as a result of European invasion. There can be no denying the adverse effects of colonization on the social, cultural and economic structure of Black Africa, as made manifest in the disruption caused to the development process itself.

With the advent of independence, Guinean women rightly expected to see measures taken to improve their social and economic standing as a reward for the contribution they had made to production in quantitative and qualitative terms and for the role they had played in liberation.

While some steps were taken at the institutional, legal and administrative levels to alter their political status, none of these measures did anything to enhance women's social standing. As the main decision-makers, men retained control over domestic resources and the fruits of international cooperation. Very few women emerged into the public arena where they would, in any case, be faced with rules of the game invented by and, obviously for, men.

Both in general terms and within the home, Guinean women remain in a subordinate position to men who exercise power in virtually all areas of life. Guinean women live in a society and culture that is traditionally androcratic and where marriage is often polygamous. The 1992 Population and Health survey shows that 50 per cent of married women aged between 15 and 45 are living in polygamous households, whereas 30 per cent of men are polygamists. Women do not always experience this as a negative state of affairs. In Balaya, in the prefecture of Léloma, some women see polygamy as a way of reducing their workload. Others say that polygamy provides them with an argument for retaining control over their own property. This does not take away from the fact, however, that polygamy undermines a woman's position and that all of the respondents in the survey denounced the practice.

The dynamics of oppression and power, which African women have defined as the key problem in analyzing social relations between the sexes, also lie at the heart of Guinean society. The question of whether women are totally excluded, somewhat marginalized or relatively integrated into spheres of power and/or influence is not only a concern for feminists: it is a fundamental equation for anyone wishing to achieve equitable and sustainable development in Guinea.

5.2 Violence against women

Violence against women persists in Guinea, as in many other countries. It is a barrier to full respect for women's dignity and integrity and to their participation on

an equal footing with men in public affairs. There are no available data on the levels of violence against women; the judicial authorities keep no systematic records and most cases of violence against women go unreported. Cases are most often settled within the family, in accordance with traditional rules. The principal forms of violence against women are described hereunder.

- **Beating**: In the past, a man had a traditional right to beat his wife for reprehensible behaviour. Although this practice has been abolished under positive law, it persists in rural communities.

- **Repudiation**: The number of divorces instigated by men is still very high. The practice is discriminatory in so far as women are often victimized for no good reason.

- **Levirate** is an ancient custom involving the remarriage of a widow to the brother of her deceased husband, sometimes against her will. The custom was designed to ensure a degree of continuity in terms of alliances formed through marriage, and to protect children. In some cases it constitutes a violation of a woman's right to freely choose her spouse.

- **Sororate** is the practice of taking the younger sister of a wife who has died in marriage in order to perpetuate an alliance between the man and woman's families. In addition to providing encouragement for early marriage of minors, the practice also sanctions forced marriage.

- **Early and forced marriage**: Most African traditions attach great importance to the marriage of a girl and to procreation. This explains the high incidence of premature marriage among women. (The adverse consequences of this phenomenon are described here below).

Forced marriages do take place and are the result of a family putting pressure on a girl to enter into a marriage against her will.

- **Sexual mutilation** is a practice that is powerfully rooted in tradition and whose effects on women's health include frigidity, complications during childbirth, the spread of AIDS and so on.

The persistence of cultural traditions and customary law perpetuates certain prejudices which sanction violence against women. On the other hand, there is no sex-based discrimination in the law and most acts of violence are subject to legal penalties. Today, the judicial authorities, government structures concerned with the advancement of women, non-governmental organizations and women's associations are all helping to influence public opinion so as to progressively eradicate all forms of violence against women. In order to get to the root of violence against women, it will be vital to carry out more in-depth studies that use supporting data to determine the levels, patterns and forms of violence perpetrated against women.

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases. (art. 4 of the Convention)

Programmes have been implemented to combat violence against women through public awareness campaigns and the dissemination of information by

paralegals and by women's non-governmental organizations which have sections devoted to the eradication of traditional practices that are harmful to mothers and children, to control of sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS and to the elimination of the practice of forced and early marriage. The draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law outlaws forced marriage.

Although efforts have been made to use public awareness campaigns as a way of progressively eradicating various forms of violence against women, levirate and female excision continue to be widely practised, particularly in rural areas.

Beating of women has become a social problem as the levels of promiscuity and frustration grow. The problem is not always obvious, since society generally forces victims to keep silent about "family matters". Women who have been raped or beaten by their husbands or by another wife, their in-laws or even members of their own family often feel shame and/or fear. Only in very extreme cases, such as death or a public scandal, do the competent authorities investigate. Consequently, there is very little statistical data about the problem.

The private media and increasingly outspoken women's organizations which bring the pressure of international public opinion to bear have helped bring cases of violence against women to light. The growing number of women lawyers and women's rights organizations offer hope that certain laws will become widely understood and translated into facts on the ground. Family education focuses on protecting maternity.

VI. Suppression of prostitution and the exploitation of prostitution

Article 6

States Parties shall taken all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

The Republic of Guinea is deeply attached to the moral and social values with which it has always been identified, including respect for the human person. Accordingly, it has never sanctioned any form of exploitation of human beings in general or of women in particular, whether it be direct or indirect.

The principle of equal dignity and equal rights of men and women has been consistently upheld by the Constitution and the law, as has the need to afford women protection against abusive and degrading treatment.

In 1958, when Guinea won its independence and became a State Member of the United Nations, it immediately embraced the ideals, principles, rights and duties set forth in the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and numerous other international treaties.

The Constitution contains a series of provisions which can usefully illustrate the consistency of this approach.

The first paragraph of its article 5 states that an individual's person and dignity are sacred and that the State has a duty to respect and protect them.

Article 6 of the Constitution provides that every person has the right to freely develop his or her personality. They have the right to life and physical integrity, and

no one may be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 8 follows on logically from the preceding articles, by stipulating that all human beings are equal before the law and that men and women have the same rights.

Prostitution has never been legal in Guinea. It is an age-old social phenomenon, which society largely rejects, condemns and deplores. Whereas it was once kept hidden from public view, it can now be seen, as in other countries, in public places such as streets, hotels, airports, bars and dance halls.

The sharp rise in prostitution over the last few decades can be explained within the context of a grave economic and social crisis, exacerbated by structural adjustment policies which have brought about the closure of numerous enterprises, rationalization in the public sector and new or higher levels of unemployment. Poverty has increased across all sectors of society, resulting in a massive exodus from the country to cities that are ill-prepared to cope with this sudden change.

Voluntary immigration (for the purposes of tourism, business or return to the country after long years of living abroad) or forced immigration (the flight of refugee populations from war in frontier zones) have also played a very important role in accelerating the above processes. The same could probably be said for the high incidence of emigration.

Economically-motivated prostitution has increased in particular thanks to the fact that neither prostitutes nor their clients are prosecuted or fined. Prostitution provides a source of income which the tax authorities tend to ignore. Unfortunately, the public authorities have thus far failed to take specific measures such as legislation which imposes, inter alia, minimum standards of health and hygiene in order to contain the phenomenon.

With prostitution growing at an alarming rate, a number of non-governmental organizations have turned their attention and energies to the problem. Their studies highlight the need to introduce regulations that will help both to curb the spread of prostitution and to assure better public health prevention.

At the same time, projects and programmes have been introduced which seek to improve the economic status of women by assuring them greater independence and control over their own affairs.

Some associations have carried out useful research into the public health implications of prostitution. Their studies yield some very interesting data about the basic motivation of prostitutes, the locations and times in which prostitution is practised, the nationalities of those involved and so on.

In a 1995 study on the prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases among prostitutes in Conakry, one women's association showed that out of a total of 112 prostitutes, 41, or 36 per cent, were HIV positive. The figure represents 44.8 per cent of the total population that was initially observed. Strictly speaking, matrimonial agencies do not exist and there is no traffic in sex in Guinea.

In addition to the moral disapproval expressed by society, the morality police has a special section devoted to the suppression of prostitution, particularly in the major cities.

In order to understand the importance which the law attaches to the elimination of this social scourge, it is necessary to examine the dissuasive and preventive measures contained in the Penal Code and the Code of Penal Procedure which were recently adopted by the National Assembly.

The legislator defines exploitation of the prostitution of others in the following articles of the Penal Code:

Article 328

"Exploitation of prostitution is the activity pursued by any man or woman who facilitates the debauchery of others by acting as an intermediary."

Article 329

"The following persons shall therefore be considered as exploiting the prostitution of others and shall face a penalty of six months to two years in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs, without prejudice to any higher penalties that may apply:

1. Any person who derives a share in any form whatsoever of the product of the prostitution of others or receives payments from a person who habitually engages in prostitution;

2. Any person who, while knowingly living with another person, is unable to demonstrate that he or she has sufficient resources to pay for his or her own upkeep;

3. Any person who employs or maintains another person for the purpose of prostitution or for traffic in prostitution or debauchery, even if that other person consents thereto and has reached his or her majority;

4. Any person who acts as an intermediary in any capacity whatsoever between persons who engage in prostitution and debauchery and individuals who exploit or remunerate the prostitution or debauchery of others."

Article 330

"A sentence of two to five years in prison and a fine of 100,000 to 1,000,000 Guinean francs shall be imposed where:

1. The crime involved a minor;

2. The crime involved the use of coercion, an abuse of authority or deception

3. The perpetrator was carrying a concealed or unconcealed weapon;

4. The perpetrator is the husband, ascendant, tutor, teacher or paid servant of either the victim or of the aforementioned persons, or a civil servant or minister of religion;

5. The perpetrator is a person whose professional functions relate to the suppression of prostitution, the protection of public health or the maintenance of law and order;

6. A person who uses threats, manipulation or any other means to undermine the efforts of qualified institutions to prevent, monitor, assist or re-educate persons involved in or at risk of becoming involved in prostitution."

Article 331

"Without prejudice to any higher penalties that might apply, a sentence of one month to two years in prison and a fine of 50,000 to 400,000 Guinean francs shall be imposed upon any individual who allows persons engaged in prostitution to carry out acts of habitual debauchery in premises or at locations over which the said individual has any kind of legal claim.

The owner and person engaging in debauchery are jointly responsible for paying any damages that might be awarded for disturbance of the peace.

Where the aforementioned offences are engaged in on an habitual basis, the court may, at the request of the owner, principal tenant, occupant or a neighbour in the same building, issue orders for the cancellation of the lease and removal of the tenant, subtenant or occupant engaged in or tolerating such offences."

The Code of Criminal Procedure includes a number of useful provisions, as shown here below.

Article 643

"For the investigation of an offence involving the exploitation of prostitution, the visits, searches and removal of property provided for under article 56, paragraph 1, may be effected at any time of the day or night, at any hotel, furnished home, boarding house, bar, club, private members' club, dance hall, place of public entertainment and annexes thereto or any other place open to or used by the public, if persons engaged in prostitution are seen to be regularly received therein.

The activities for which this article provides may not be carried out for any purpose other than investigation and corroboration of offences relating to the exploitation of prostitution, at the risk of rendering such activities legally null and void."

Article 644

"In the course of proceedings for an offence relating to the exploitation of prostitution, the examining judge may issue orders for the total or partial closure of all of the places referred to in the preceding article for a temporary period of three months."

Apart from measures of a repressive nature, the Government has instituted rehabilitation and development projects targeted at urban and rural women and run in conjunction with public awareness and information campaigns. The Gender and Development Framework Programme, which the Government developed in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is a rich source of proposals and projects which could help, with adequate financing, to truly advance the status of the girl child and women in Guinea, particularly in the economic sphere. The Programme represents the best hope of escape from the vicious circle of poverty and of guaranteeing opportunities for retraining, rehabilitation and the achievement of independence.

The information gathered while drafting this part of the report on article 6 of the Convention has highlighted the need for more detailed studies and statistical data about the various forms of prostitution [in Guinea]. These would improve our knowledge of and help to contain a phenomenon which, as a vector for sexually

transmitted diseases and AIDS, threatens to severely undermine the significant improvements that have been made in the area of public health.

VII. Political and public life

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

Guinea has signed and ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

In addition, its Constitution provides women with a full range of guarantees against discrimination in public life and, consequently, in the political arena. Article 8 of the Constitution provides as follows:

"All human beings are equal before the law. Men and women enjoy the same rights. No one shall be afforded privileges or suffer disadvantage on account of his or her birth, race, ethnicity, language, or political, philosophical or religious beliefs and opinions."

Men and women enjoy the same fundamental rights pursuant to this article and there is no discrimination between them in terms of voting or eligibility for election.

In a context in which democracy should be seen, first and foremost, as the basic point of departure for the achievement of participative, lasting and sustainable development, the role played by women becomes a key factor in ensuring the viability of the democratic process. Looking at the negligible number of women occupying positions in elected bodies and, more generally, at the centre of power, one may surmise that without the requisite political will to introduce realistic policies aimed at reversing current trends, the quality and sustainability of Guinea's democratization process will continue to hang in the balance.

Women have a long way to go before achieving equality with men in the decision-making process. In the 1995 legislative elections, less than nine per cent of those elected to the National Assembly were women (10 out of a total of 114). Out of 22 Government ministers, there are currently only two women ministers, while data on the judicial system, trade unions and other corporations show that women play a marginal role in the decision-making process across the entire public sphere.

And yet, women contributed actively to Guinea's political reawakening, supporting the struggle for independence and working as activists in various political groupings.

Guinean women won the right to vote in 1956, two years before independence, with the voting age set at 18. Women account for an extremely high percentage of the electorate and play a decisive role in networks of political patronage. However, they have been relegated to grass roots activities within political parties and are used to position male decision-makers.

Today, there is a fundamental disparity between the numerical and economic importance of Guinean women, who account for 51.3 per cent of the population, and the influence which they exert in political life and decision-making.

Customs, family responsibilities, the psychological and sociocultural barriers created by preconceived notions of the role that women should play in society as well as the ever-present shadow cast by the husband (in terms of inheritance, guarantees and so on) are social and cultural factors which help to explain women's poor showing in political and public life.

Illiteracy rates are high among this section of the population.

The State, non-governmental organizations and donors have failed to coordinate their efforts on behalf of women at the institutional level.

At the same time, political parties have done nothing to encourage more women to put themselves forward for election.

If such obstacles are to be overcome, it will be necessary for both leaders and women themselves to change their mentality.

Over many years, consistent and significant efforts have been made and many wide-ranging initiatives have been undertaken to integrate women into the development process. These have had some success, but much remains to be done. The Government is aware of this and, with the help of the United Nations, is now introducing a programme devoted to women's development.

Women have shown that they are capable of taking the initiative. What they need is support to gain access to the world of business. The soon to be implemented Gender and Development Framework Programme will constitute a fundamental point of reference for addressing women's general concerns at the national level. The Basic Initiatives Framework Programme will contribute by helping women to set up income-generating activities, with a particular focus on those living in rural areas.

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (art. 7 of the Convention)

In spite of these efforts, women are prevented from playing an active role in public life because of their numerous family responsibilities. Various kinds of social prejudice also reduce the number of opportunities available to them in terms of participation in the running of State affairs and decision-making. The indicators here below show just how many women occupy decision-making positions.

Compared to the figure of 30 per cent, which the Economic and Social Council in 1993 set as the minimum percentage of decision-making positions that ought to be held by women, Guinea's National Assembly has only 10 women deputies out of a total of 114.

Women are poorly represented in public bodies at the local level. Only three municipal mayors out of a total of 38 are women.

The marginal presence of women in decision-making positions is not restricted to elected bodies alone; available data suggest that the phenomenon is a generalized one. While 11 of the 45 advisers to the Economic and Social Council are women,

this is an exceptional feat in an institution moving towards parity. Out of 31 ambassadors, only one is a woman; of a total of 14 Supreme Court judges, only three are women; four out of 35 presiding judges and justices of the peace are women; at the level of State enterprises and companies, there is one chairperson of the board of directors out of a total of 12. There is not a single women working in a position of leadership at the sub-national level, since women have not been deemed fit to assume the duties of a regional governor, prefect or sub-prefect.

With these figures, it is not difficult to conclude that Guinean women will remain far from the centres of power during the third millennium, unless vigorous and pertinent measures are taken to reverse current trends.

Statistical data relating to the employment of women in central departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and international organizations

Departments	*Women*	*Total*
Central departments	5	237
Embassies	26	263
International organizations	1	

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Percentage of women in Civil Service positions

Positions of responsibility and decision-making	*Total number of men and women*	*Number of women*	*Percentage of women*
Members of the National Assembly	114	10	8.8
Ministers	23	2	8.7
Secretaries of State	23	1	4.5
Principal private secretaries	23	3	13.0
Ministerial councillors	111	4	3.60
Ministerial representatives	23	0	0
National directors	120	6	5
Ambassadors	22	1	4.55
Embassy advisors	22	1	4.55
Regional governors	8	0	0
Prefects	33	0	0
Mayors	38	3	7.89
Prefectoral secretaries-general	33	1	3
Sub-prefects	312	0	0
Municipal secretaries-general	38	0	0
Political party leaders	46	1	2.2
Supreme Court judges	14	3	21.4

Positions of responsibility and decision-making	*Total number of men and women*	*Number of women*	*Percentage of women*
Economic and Social Council representatives	45	9	20
Public prosecutors	6	1	16.7
University rectors	2	0	0
Directors of institutes of higher learning	4	0	0
Hospital managers	33	1	3.0
Chairpersons of the board of national companies	38	1	2.6
Knights of the National Order of Merit	5	1	20.0
Grand officers of the National Order of Merit	20	0	0
Officers of the National Order of Merit	0	0	0
Members of the National Order of Merit	0	0	0
Lawyers	70	4	5.71
Bailiffs	41	3	7.32
Notaries public	5	1	20.0
Special court judges	8	5	62.5
CHU	2	0	0

Source: Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Civil Service

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country. (art. 7 of the Convention)

Many women's associations, groupings and cooperatives have been formed and have grown since the Second Republic introduced a vast programme of national recovery in 1984, providing, inter alia, for the right to freedom of expression. Of the 46 political parties which have received official recognition under the multi-party system, only one is led by a woman. Every political party has its own bureau of women's affairs. At the trade union level, the National Confederation of Guinean Workers, acknowledging the role of women workers in development, has followed the example of the other member States of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity by setting up a national committee of women workers. The committee offers women workers various types of training aimed at improving their knowledge of the trade union system and enhancing their vocational skills. A 13-member committee of women workers (on which Guinea is represented) operates from within the Executive Bureau of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity.

Two non-governmental organizations, the Network of Guinean Women Ministers and Parliamentarians and the Association of Guinean Women Leaders, act as pressure groups lobbying for the inclusion of women in the decision-making process.

The goal of the Framework Programme of Support for Private Sector Development is to come up with specific complementary proposals directly targeted at providing access to entrepreneurial opportunities. The programme is designed to equally benefit both men and women entrepreneurs.

The Habitat programme, adopted pursuant to the Istanbul Conference of 11 June 1996, aims at guaranteeing equal access to housing, land and public services in urban and rural areas, in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

More needs to be done to encourage and train girls and women for entry into the army and sectors such as construction, public works, postal and telecommunications and environmental services which have been the traditional preserve of men.

The following associations are working in the field to achieve these aims:

- The Association of Guinean Women Engineers brings together 40 engineers, architects, town planners and developers, including a group of women producers of bricks and tiles.
- The Women, Mining and the Environment association is made up of groups of women gold prospectors.

VIII. Representation and participation at the international level

Article 8

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Women in the Republic of Guinea are offered opportunities on equal terms with men to represent their Government at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

None of the provisions of Decree No. 085/PRG/SGG, which establishes a career structure for diplomatic staff, and administrative decree No. 95/106/PRG/SGG attached thereto which defines the reporting structure and provides for the transfer of Guinea's diplomatic and consular staff, discriminates against women in any way, to the extent that no distinction is made on grounds of gender at all.

However, it must be acknowledged that in spite of constant endeavours in this regard, there are very few women representing the State at the international level. Only 23 women, one of whom is the Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations at New York, are employed in diplomatic missions. Compared with the large number of men working in international institutions, women are very poorly represented.

In addition to social and cultural factors, this situation is also explained by the absence of administrative structures capable of assuring effective placement and support of international staff.

The Republic of Guinea is a founding member of the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States. Guinea also plays an active role in the work of such organizations as the Pan-African Women's Organization, the West African Women's Association and the International Committee of African Women for Development.

IX. Nationality

Article 9

(1) States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless of force upon her the nationality of the husband.

In the Republic of Guinea, the right to acquire, change or retain nationality is governed by the provisions of the Civil Code, which was promulgated on 1 January 1996.

Since nationality is the expression of a legal relationship between the individual and the State, only the law can determine the conditions for its acquisition or loss.

Under article 25 of the Civil Code, persons born and persons domiciled in Guinean territory or who become separated therefrom pursuant to a duly ratified international treaty entailing annexation or cession acquire or lose Guinean nationality according to the provisions of the said treaty. No international convention may give rise to a change of nationality, unless it expressly provides therefor.

If one looks at these provisions closely, it is clear that they do not discriminate between the sexes in any way. The use of the word "persons" as opposed to "man or woman" suggests that these provisions apply equally to both women and men.

9.1 Acquisition of nationality

We need to distinguish between two different types of situation:

- Acquisition of Guinean nationality by a foreign man who marries a Guinean woman;
- Acquisition of Guinean nationality by a foreign women who marries a Guinean man.

9.1.1 Acquisition of Guinean nationality by a foreign man who marries a Guinean woman

A foreign man does not acquire Guinean nationality by virtue of marriage alone, but through a process of naturalization. The only concession is that the five-year residence requirement which applies to all other persons is reduced to two years (article 73, paragraph 1, of the Civil Code).

A foreign woman who marries a Guinean man acquires Guinean nationality at the time of the marriage, provided that she has not been the subject of a deportation

order or placed under house arrest and that the Government does not issue a decree, in the six months following the celebration of the marriage, denying her the right to acquire Guinean nationality.

According to article 50 of the Civil Code, if the national laws of a woman's State of origin allow her to retain her nationality, she has the option to make a statement prior to the celebration of the marriage declining Guinean nationality. Even if she is a minor, she may exercise this option without requiring permission to do so.

Article 51 of the Code provides that in the six months following the celebration of the marriage, the Government may issue a decree denying a foreign woman the right to acquire Guinean nationality.

Should the Government so decide, the party concerned is deemed never to have acquired Guinean nationality.

However, where the validity of any legal transaction which has taken place prior to the decree was dependent upon the acquisition by the woman of Guinean nationality, such validity may not be contested on the grounds that the woman did not subsequently acquire Guinean nationality.

According to article 52 of the Civil Code, a foreign woman who has been the subject of a deportation order or placed under house arrest and whose case is not expressly mentioned in a report outlining the circumstances therefor may not benefit from the provisions of article 49 of the same Code.

Article 53 stipulates that during the six-month period provided for under article 51 of the Code, a woman who acquires Guinean nationality by marriage may neither vote nor put herself forward for any elected position or office requiring the holder to possess Guinean nationality.

9.1.2 Acquisition of nationality by virtue of an administrative decision

Article 69 of the Civil Code stipulates that Guinean nationality may be acquired at the request of the foreign national by virtue of an administrative decision providing for naturalization or reinstatement of nationality.

This article makes no distinction between men and women in terms of the naturalization procedure and therefore is non-discriminatory. The wife and adult children of a foreign national who acquires Guinean nationality are not required to fulfil any residence requirement. The same applies to a legitimate minor born to foreign parents where the child's mother acquires Guinean nationality during the lifetime of the father (art. 74, paras. 1 to 8 of the Civil Code).

Article 74 of the Civil Code stipulates that the following persons may be naturalized without needing to satisfy any residence requirements:

1. A legitimate minor born to a foreign parent, if the mother acquires Guinean nationality while the father is alive;

2. An illegitimate minor born to foreign parents, if the parent with whom parentage is subsequently established acquires Guinean nationality during the lifetime of the other parent;

3. A minor born to a foreign father who acquires Guinean nationality in the case, or in accordance with article 93 of the Code, where such child has not acquired Guinean nationality by association;

4. The adult wife and child of a foreign national who acquires Guinean nationality;

5. A child one of whose parents has lost their Guinean nationality for reasons beyond his or her control, unless the nationality of that parent has been revoked;

6. A foreign national who has volunteered for service in the Guinean or an allied army in time of war, or a person who has served in the Guinean army and has been officially registered as an ex-serviceman in conformity with the rules in force;

7. A foreign national who is adopted by a Guinean national;

8. A foreign national who has performed exceptional service on behalf of Guinea or whose naturalization is a matter to which Guinea attaches exceptional importance. In such cases, the naturalization decree may be issued only after the Ministry of Justice has submitted a report with a statement of reasons.

A further provision of a non-discriminatory nature stipulates that a person may not acquire Guinean nationality if he or she has been served with a prison sentence of more than one year that has not been vacated by a pardon for an offence under ordinary law for which Guinean law imposes a penalty or term of imprisonment, or to a sentence (which has not been vacated by a pardon) in connection with the crime of robbery, breach of trust, fraud, indecent assault, vagary and so on (article 74, paras. 1 to 6 of the Guinean Civil Code).

Article 78 stipulates a person may not be naturalized unless he or she is of high moral standing or if he or she has been served with a sentence of more than one year in prison (which has not been vacated by a pardon) for an infringement of ordinary law for which Guinean law imposes a penalty or term of imprisonment or to a sentence (which has not been vacated by a pardon) in connection with the crime of robbery, breach of trust, fraud, indecent exposure, indecent assault, procurement, vagary or begging. It is possible, however, for sentences that have been imposed abroad not be to be taken into consideration. In these cases, the naturalization process may only be completed after consultations with the Ministry of Justice.

9.2 Change of nationality

Change of nationality consists either of the loss, forfeiture or revocation of nationality.

9.2.1 Loss of Guinean nationality

Under article 95 of the Guinean Civil Code, nationality is lost when a Guinean adult voluntarily acquires a foreign nationality. The same applies to a Guinean who decides to repudiate his or her nationality. Guinean minors also lose their Guinean nationality by a decision of the Government.

The loss of Guinean nationality results ipso facto in the loss of all rights associated therewith.

A foreign woman who acquires Guinean nationality enjoys all of the rights attached thereto, until such nationality is forfeited.

The fact that the legislator uses the term "Guinean" and provides that Guinean nationality may only be lost if a person of either sex acquires a foreign nationality suggests that the law makes no distinction between men and women when it comes to loss of nationality.

9.2.2 Forfeiture of nationality

Article 106 of the Civil Code stipulates that any individual who acquires Guinean nationality may forfeit it by decree, if he or she is found guilty of an act constituting a crime against the internal or external security of the State.

Forfeiture may be extended to include the wife and minor children of the individual concerned, provided that the individual is of foreign origin and has retained a foreign nationality. The measure may not be extended to include minor children, without also applying to the wife (art. 108).

An individual may forfeit Guinean nationality by decree, if:

1. He or she is found guilty of dodging military service;

2. He or she is found guilty of an act which constitutes a crime or offence against the internal or external security of the State;

3. He or she has been condemned in Guinea or abroad for an act which constitutes a crime under Guinean law and carries a sentence of less than five years in prison.

A measure revoking the Guinean nationality of the individual concerned may be extended to include his wife and minor children, provided that the individual is of foreign origin and has retained a foreign nationality. However, such a measure may not be extended to minor children without also applying to the wife.

Here, too, the legislator makes no distinction between men and women. The term "individual" may be taken as referring to both sexes.

9.3 The right to retain nationality

Marriage of a foreign woman to a Guinean man

Just as the law grants a foreign woman who marries a Guinean man the right to acquire Guinean nationality (art. 49 of the Civil Code), it also accords her the right to retain her nationality, if the laws of her State of origin so allow (art. 50 of the Civil Code). The only condition which the law imposes in the second case is that the woman must make a declaration prior to the marriage declining Guinean nationality. Even if she is a minor, she may exercise this option without needing permission to do so.

9.3.1 Marriage of a Guinean woman to a foreign man

Under article 102 of the Civil Code, a Guinean woman who marries a foreign man retains her nationality, unless she makes a declaration prior to her marriage expressly repudiating her nationality. This she may do even if she is a minor.

The declaration is valid only if the wife acquires or is able to acquire her husband's nationality under the laws of her spouse's State of origin.

Looking at these provisions, it is clear that the legislator does not seek to prevent Guinean women who marry foreign nationals from enjoying or exercising their rights as Guinean nationals on the same basis as men. These provisions are evidence of a desire not only to safeguard the right of women to freely choose their nationality in accordance with article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but also to avoid the problem of statelessness.

9.3.2 Nationality of a woman in the case of divorce

Although they make no specific reference to nationality or to men and women, articles 356 and 357 of the Civil Code do state that in the case of divorce, the spouse who has been repudiated may lose all of the advantages which the other spouse had bestowed upon him or her.

The spouse who obtains the divorce retains the advantages which the other spouse has bestowed upon him or her, even if provision has been made for the reciprocal enjoyment of such advantages and reciprocity has not been afforded.

Under article 104 of the Civil Code, a Guinean who behaves to all intents and purposes as if he were the national of a foreign country, may, if he is a national of that foreign country, lose Guinean nationality by decree. In this case, the individual is absolved of any obligation to pay allegiance to Guinea from the date of the decree.

The measure taken with respect to such person may be extended to include his wife and minor children, if they themselves have foreign nationality.

Articles 106 and 108 of the Code add that any individual who has acquired Guinean nationality may have it revoked it by decree.

Revocation of nationality may be extended to include the wife and minor children of the party concerned, provided that the individual is of foreign origin and that they have retained a foreign nationality.

The above provisions discriminate against women by extending measures for the loss or revocation of nationality to include the wife of a Guinean who has acquired foreign nationality, without any reciprocal arrangement applying to men.

The final paragraphs of articles 106 and 108 of the Guinean Civil Code should be abrogated, in order to bring them into line with the Convention.

(2) States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children. (art. 9 of the Convention)

A child's nationality is based on the principle of nationality by parentage (jus sanguinis).

The following persons are Guinean nationals:

1. A legitimate child born to a Guinean father;

2. An illegitimate child, where the parent with whom parentage is established from the beginning is a Guinean national (article 31 of the Civil Code).

3. The legitimate child of a Guinean mother and a father who has no nationality or whose nationality is unknown (ibid).

4. An illegitimate child, where the parent with whom parentage is subsequently established is Guinean and the other parent has no nationality or his or her nationality is unknown (ibid).

Under article 32 of the Civil Code, the following persons are Guinean nationals, unless they were born outside of Guinea and choose to repudiate Guinean nationality in the 10 months prior to reaching their majority:

1. The legitimate child of a Guinean mother and a foreign father;

2. An illegitimate child, where the parent with whom parentage is subsequently established is Guinean and the other parent is a foreign national.

By analysing these provisions we can see that there is a certain degree of equality as concerns the acquisition of Guinean nationality through the father or the mother, even if nationality is systematically transmitted through the father. The conditions which the law imposes on the mother do not place her at a disadvantage with respect to the father of the child, even if the latter was born abroad (article 32 of the Civil Code).

9.4 Attribution of nationality on the basis of birth in Guinea (jus soli)

Articles 34 and 35 of the Civil Code show that the legislator affords women and men equal treatment with regard to attribution of nationality on the basis of jus soli.

The only provision of a particular nature is found in article 37, which guarantees a legitimate child born in Guinea to a mother who was also born in Guinea the right to repudiate his or her Guinean nationality in the six months prior to reaching his or her majority.

9.4.1 Acquisition of nationality on the basis of parentage

According to article 46 of the Civil Code, an illegitimate child that is legitimized during its minority may only acquire Guinean nationality if his or her father is Guinean. No account is taken of the mother's nationality.

Article 47 stipulates that a child that is legitimized through adoption in accordance with the provisions of the Code acquires Guinean nationality if his or her adoptive father is Guinean.

These provisions discriminate against Guinean women whose children are legitimized during their minority, but whose husbands are not Guinean. Such children cannot acquire Guinean nationality for the simple reason that the father is not Guinean.

9.4.2 Loss of Guinean nationality

Article 101 of the Civil Code manifests exactly the same form of discrimination, by providing that an illegitimate child who becomes a Guinean national by virtue of his or her mother's acquisition of Guinean nationality, loses that same nationality if he is legitimized during his minority by the marriage of the mother to a foreign national.

The child is absolved of any duty of allegiance towards Guinea from the date of such legitimation. However, the child retains Guinean nationality, if he or she

does not acquire the nationality of the foreign father or if the provisions of articles 36 and 43 of the Civil Code are applicable to him.

From the foregoing, it is clear that a child that is legitimized during its minority can only acquire Guinean nationality if the father is Guinean. The fact that the mother is a Guinean national does not of itself confer nationality upon a child. Finally, article 103 states that Guinean nationality can only be revoked pursuant to an order issued in conformity with the provisions set forth under section VII of the Civil Code. The order must indicate, where appropriate, the date on which the party concerned will be absolved from the duty of allegiance towards Guinea. It may also determine that the person in question has never been Guinean, if his or her father ceased to be a Guinean prior to that person's birth.

9.4.3 Disputes over nationality

In disputes over nationality, the civil court of ordinary law has competence for attribution (ratione material), while territorial competence (ratione loci) is granted to the court of the place of domicile, or that failing, the court of the place of residence of the person whose nationality is in dispute or, if such person has no domicile or residence in Guinea, before the Conakry court (articles 142 and 145 of the Civil Code).

9.4.4 Persons who may institute civil proceedings relating to nationality

There is no discrimination in this area. Article 147 of the Civil Code provides that every individual has the right to apply to a civil court for the principal and direct purpose of determining whether or not he or she is or is a Guinean national. Such person must issue a writ against the Public Prosecutor who, notwithstanding any provisions enacted prior to this Code, shall act solely for the purpose of defending the charge without prejudice to the right of interested third parties to make their own cases.

No discrimination exists with regard to the giving of evidence before the courts. In other words, on the basis of the principle of actori incumbit probatio, the burden of proof rests upon the person who, using legal action or exceptional measures, claims to have or not to have Guinean nationality.

The same applies to any person who uses the same means to contest the Guinean nationality of an individual possessing a Guinean nationality certificate issued in conformity with article 167 of the Civil Code and the articles that follow.

X. Equal access to education

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

[...]

Numerous measures have been taken in the Guinean education sector to close the gap between the level of education among Guinean boys and girls. Nevertheless,

the situation of women remains very worrying. The fact that the illiteracy rate among women is 85 per cent, as opposed to 62 per cent for men, highlights the imbalance between the two sexes.

Guinea has endeavoured to improve women's lives by involving them fully in the development process. This objective can only be achieved if the education that is offered enables the girl child to acquire knowledge and specific skills in all areas of national life and women to gain access to a form of education that fosters the realization of their full potential, emancipation and social and professional integration.

10.1 The family

Children's education within the family would not be complete without the effective involvement of women. Family education consists of:

- Study of the Qu'ran;
- The performance of domestic chores such as preparation of meals, washing, shopping for the family's daily basic needs, drawing water from the river (or fountain), chopping wood, hulling rice, working in the fields, building huts and enclosures and initiation into family life.

There are many parents who still believe that education is not indispensable, or even necessary, for girls. They bring their daughters up to find a "good husband" before it is too late. Their priority is to prepare their daughters to become ideal, or model wives, by which they mean submissive wives. For them, it would be unwise to allow girls to go to school with boys. Even if a girl managed to avoid all the "traps" at school and were to graduate and join the Civil Service, she would, according to this thesis, have too much freedom. This would undermine the authority of her husband, who, it should be remembered, is seen as the bridge between a bride and God.

10.2 Schools

Since schools represents the best means by which education may be effectively delivered, it is worth looking at how the education system works at the pre-school, primary, secondary, technical/vocational and university levels.

Although women invest a great deal in education, as demonstrated by the large number of women primary school teachers, the enrolment rate among girls remains deplorably low.

Statistical data drawn up at the time of the advent of the Second Republic speak for themselves:

- Female illiteracy rate:	82%
- Rate of enrolment of girls in primary education:	33%
- Percentage of girls admitted to technical/vocational schools:	1.7%
- Percentage of girls admitted to university:	1%
- Drop-out rate for girls:	27%
- Drop-out rate for boys:	10%

- Proportion of girls repeating a year or grade 24%
- Proportion of boys repeating a year or grade 21%

For years now, the Government has accorded priority to keeping girls in school. Its main objective is to lower the barriers that stop girls from attending, remaining in or performing at school.

10.3 Associations

National associations and non-governmental organizations design activities and training sessions on themes such as mother and infant health; family planning; hygiene in the home; protection of the environment; water and sanitation, functional literacy and so on. Information, education and communication activities are used to make sure that the content of training sessions trickles down to women at literacy centres and in economic groupings.

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in education establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training; (art. 10 of the Convention)

10.4. Action taken to enhance participation in and expand basic education

10.4.1 The national policy framework

A variety of reforms have been introduced with a view to enhancing the quality of basic education. The following activities were undertaken between 1991 and June 1993 as part of the Sectoral Adjustment Programme for Education (Phase I):

- Academic curricula and educational subject matter were reworked in order to better reflect the real needs of the country.
- Primary school teachers received additional teacher training.
- Research was carried out to bring subject matter more into line with employment opportunities.
- Educational infrastructure was developed to accommodate more children.
- Parent-teacher and friends-of-the-school associations were set up in every school.
- Strategies were devised to provide incentives for girls to study technical and scientific subjects.
- A number of institutional and pedagogical reforms were introduced in accordance with the recommendations of the conference.

10.4.1.1 Studies and research projects

The following studies and research projects were undertaken with a view to identifying the constraints and barriers impeding the education of girls and developing remedial strategies:

(a) An analysis of the situation of the girl child, April 1990;

(b) A June 1990 study on access of girls to primary school;

(c) A study on the sociocultural and socioeconomic aspects of the education of girls in Guinea;

(d) An analysis of the experience of girls in the classroom;

(e) A survey of education in the rural environment;

(f) A study on the elimination of discriminatory stereotypes using curricula designed by the National Institute of Research and Educational Design;

(g) A study on the participation of girls in vocational education;

(h) A study on gender and primary school attendance in Guinea.

10.4.2 Institutional development

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve its aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants; (art. 10 of the Convention)

Initiatives taken at the institutional level are described hereunder.

1. The National Committee for Basic Education for All has been set up to run an extensive public education programme focusing on the importance of the Basic Education for All Programme and of strengthening existing institutions involved in formal and informal education.

2. Schools have been built or renovated and toilets installed as part of the Sectoral Adjustment Programme. Over 3,000 new classrooms have been built in the last few years, with the support of local authorities, helping to expand capacity. A further 5,300 classrooms are planned for the second phase of the Programme, an average of 1,000 per year.

3. An equity committee was established in 1991 to carry out in-depth research and develop strategies that will help to increase overall school attendance rates and reduce disparities between boys and girls and between urban and rural areas.

4. Legal texts (Circular No. 1720, providing for the expulsion of any school girl found to be pregnant) and attitudes that discriminate against girls at school have been reviewed.

5. Discriminatory stereotypes have been eliminated from school programmes and textbooks.

6. An awareness campaign has been launched to try to alter the attitudes and behaviour of families and parents towards school and thus to stimulate demand and

improve school attendance rates. Eight prefectures have been selected for the piloting of this campaign (Boffa, Télimélé, Koubia, Lélouma, Mandiana, Dinguiraye, Beyla and Macenta).

7. The Canadian International Development Agency provides support in the form of grants for female students (36 for general education and mathematics and 97 for technical and vocational education) as part of the Women, Science and Technology Programme. The Programme's main goal is to close the gap between the numbers of girls and boys studying scientific and technical subjects by getting girls to take up and stick at these subjects.

8. Better use has been made of human resources through rationalization of mixed grade classes. This in turn has paved the way for the introduction of uniform standards throughout rural schools, helping to increase the number of spaces available and reduce the imbalance between rural and urban areas and between boys and girls, with girls now able to complete their primary education at their local school.

9. A programme offering small grants to schools has been designed to revitalize educational infrastructure by supporting those teachers who wish to improve their teaching by undertaking further training. The programme provides for a range of planned activities and research projects designed by groups of teachers on the basis of their own ideas and needs and in collaboration with local institutions and structures.

National technical and vocational schools' entrance examinations for the 1998 session

Statistical information about candidates

I. Type A schools

		Number of candidates		*Number admitt*	
No.	*Schools*	*Total*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Bo*
1	Labé Community Health Care College	1 626	875	40	
2	Kankan Community Health Care College	1 104	598	40	
3	N'Zérékoré Community Health Care College	1 247	443	40	
4	Bordo Kankan State Agricultural and Animal Farming College	459	154	60	
5	Tolo Mamou State Agricultural and Animal Farming College	566	150	30	
6	Macenta State Agricultural and Animal Farming College	341	51	60	
7	Ho-Chi-Minh Vocational Training Centre	205	35	100	
8	Faranah Vocational Training Centre	66	13	60	
9	N'Zérékoré Vocational Training Centre	163	10	112	
10	Labé Vocational Training Centre	300	101	98	
11	Boké Vocational Training Centre	267	18	80	

		Number of candidates		Number admitted	
12	Kindia Vocational Training Centre	217	19	100	10
13	Matoto Vocational Training Centre	295	9	125	9
14	Donka Vocational Training Centre	237	11	118	7
15	Maritime Vocational Training Centre	513	84	78	11
16	National Post Office and Telecommunications College	1 597	661	53	26
17	National Secretarial and Business College	1 317	731	96	53
18	Mamou State College for Waterways and Forestry Technicians	391	83	25	7
19	National School of Tourism and Hotel Management	876	419	61	32
20	National College of Physical Education	61	8	30	5
	Total	**11 848**	**4 473**	**1 406**	**326**

II. Type B schools

		Number of candidates		Number admitted	
No.	*Schools*	*Total*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*
1	National Agricultural and Animal Farming College (Macenta, Bordo, Tolo)	54	4	44	3
2	National Secretarial and Business College	209	75	120	37
3	National Post Office and Telecommunications College	203	47	32	6
4	National School of Applied Arts and Crafts	479	48	80	7
5	Primary School Teacher Training College	1 500	415	1 460	412
	Total	**2 455**	**589**	**1 736**	**465**

III. Summary table

		Number of candidates		Number admitted	
No.	*Schools*	*Total*	*Girls*	*Total*	*Boys*
1	Type A	11 867	4 476	1 406	326
2	Type B	2 445	589	1 732	465
	Total	**2 455**	**589**	**1 736**	**465**

Bibliography: Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, Archives and Reference Department, Competitive Examinations section

Final year examination results of State technical and vocational training centres, 1998

A. Vocational training centres

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Masonry	168	4	9	126	75
2	Plumbing	142	12	24	137	96
3	Car mechanics	169	7	18	132	78
4	General mechanics	15	0	0	13	87
5	Boilermaking	139	5	0	97	70
6	Domestic electricity	156	19	31	138	88
7	Industrial electricity	35	3	12	34	97
8	Carpentry	137	3	27	123	90
9	Industrial electricity (Matoto)	25	0	8	21	84
10	Diesel engines	19	1	0	17	89
11	Mining	8	6	1	8	100
12	Train driving	14	0	0	13	93
13	Electropneumatics	7	1	1	6	86
14	Marine mechanics	16	1	2	15	94
15	Shipbuilding	13	0	5	13	100
16	Sailing, fishing	35	7	3	32	91
	Total	**1 098**	**69**	**141**	**925**	**84**

B. National School of Applied Arts and Crafts

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Electromechanics	12	4	3	12	100
2	Mechanics and general maintenance	12	2	4	12	100
3	Diesel auto mechanics	6	0	1	5	83
	Total	**30**	**6**	**8**	**29**	**97**

C. National Post Office and Telecommunications College

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Communications networks	34	13	2	28	82
2	Radio broadcasting	12	2	1	10	83
	Total	**46**	**15**	**3**	**38**	**83**

D. Training and retraining centres (Kinkon and Pita)

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Mathematics and physics	4	0	1	4	100
2	French	11	0	3	11	100
	Total	**15**	**0**	**4**	**15**	**100**

E. Primary school teacher training college

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Teacher training	15	12	0	5	33
	Total	**15**	**12**	**0**	**5**	**33**

Summary table

Type A schools

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Masonry	168	4	9	126	75
2	Plumbing	142	12	24	137	96
3	Car mechanics	169	7	18	132	78
4	General mechanics	15	0	0	13	87
5	Boilermaking	139	5	0	97	70
6	Domestic electricity	156	19	31	138	88
7	Industrial electricity	60	3	20	55	92
8	Carpentry	137	3	27	123	90
9	Diesel engines	19	1	0	17	89
10	Mining	8	6	1	8	100
11	Train driving	14	0	0	13	93

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
12	Electropneumatics	7	1	1	6	86
13	Marine mechanics	16	1	2	15	94
14	Shipbuilding	13	0	5	13	100
15	Sailing and fishing	35	7	3	32	91
16	Network switching	34	13	12	28	82
17	Radio broadcasting	12	2	1	10	83
18	Mathematics and physics	4	0	1	4	100
19	French	11	0	3	11	100
20	Primary school teacher training	15	12	0	5	33
21	Community health care	317	195	89	311	98
22	Agriculture	47	8	5	45	96
23	Animal farming	76	4	10	58	76
24	Waterways and forests	20	3	6	20	100
25	Accountancy	83	28	17	82	99
26	Typing	86	80	17	81	94
27	Hairdressing	9	9	0	9	100
28	Dressmaking	61	76	10	58	95
29	Insurance	7	3	0	6	86
30	Transport	93	39	2	84	90

Type B schools

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
31	Electromechanics	12	4	3	12	100
32	General mechanics and maintenance	12	2	4	12	100
33	Diesel auto mechanics	6	0	1	5	83
34	Agriculture	58	4	10	58	100
35	Animal farming	36	10	5	36	100
36	Accountancy	138	47	20	124	90
37	Computing	143	65	19	138	97
38	Advanced secretarial skills	47	43	5	44	94
	Total	**2 425**	**716**	**381**	**2 166**	**89**

F. Community health care colleges

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Community health care	317	195	89	311	98
	Total	**317**	**195**	**89**	**311**	**98**

G. National agricultural and animal farming colleges

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Agriculture Type A	47	8	5	45	96
2	Agriculture Type B	58	4	10	58	100
3	Animal Farming Type A	76	23	6	70	92
4	Animal Farming Type B	36	10	5	36	100
	Total	**217**	**45**	**26**	**209**	**96**

H. Mamou State College for Waterways and Forestry Technicians

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Waterways and forestry management	20	3	6	20	100
	Total	**20**	**3**	**6**	**20**	**96**

I. National Secretarial and Business College

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	High school technical certificate in accountancy	22	11	6	21	95
2	Accountancy assistant	83	28	17	82	99
3	Typing	86	80	17	81	94
4	Executive secretarial work	9	6	3	9	100
	Total	**200**	**125**	**43**	**193**	**97**

J. Private Schools

No.	*Subjects*	*Total number of candidates*	*Girls*	*Average ≤ 14*	*Average ≤ 10*	*Per cent*
1	Secondary technical certificate in secretarial skills	38	37	2	35	92
2	Secondary technical certificate in computing	143	62	19	138	97
3	Secondary technical certificate in accountancy	116	36	14	103	89
4	Primary certificate in secretarial skills	68	61	10	63	93
5	Primary certificate in hairdressing	9	9	0	9	100
6	Primary certificate in dressmaking	21	21	0	21	100
7	Primary certificate in insurance	7	3	0	6	86
8	Primary certificate in transport	93	39	2	84	90
9	Primary certificate in accountancy	136	64	15	115	85
10	Certificate of professional achievement in dressmaking	40	35	10	37	92
	Total	**671**	**367**	**72**	**611**	**91**

10.5 Informal education

10.5.1 Literacy centres

As of 31 July 1997, Guinea had 47 literacy centres. The main operators in this field are the National Department of Adult Literacy, which is responsible for developing all national programmes, and a number of non-governmental organizations.

Subjects relating to health, hygiene, sanitation and the environment are taught at post-literacy and adult literacy and vocational training centres, to women's groupings and at the women's self-help centres. Initiatives taken in this area are described below.

- UNICEF has set up a female literacy training support programme.
- Integrated women's projects have been piloted (in the areas of health and agriculture).
- Women's vocational literacy projects have been piloted.
- A literacy programme has been designed to reach out to 100,000 women through the cooperative movement.
- A 1997-2001 action plan for the advancement of women has been put in place.

– Post-literacy training activities are encouraged as a way of helping women to use their new skills to improve the quality of their lives.

10.5.2 Nafa centres[1]

As of 31 July 1997, Guinea had 63 Nafa centres, 58 of them basically geared towards women. The centres were set up as part of the follow-up to a review exercise launched by the Guinean authorities and involving various bodies and non-governmental organizations working in the sector. The first centres were established in 1993, and their principal goal is to promote the development of children (particularly the girl child) who have been unable to attend school or have had to drop out of formal education for various reasons. The centres help to reduce illiteracy and to reintegrate young persons into society by encouraging them to take responsibility for themselves and to contribute actively to their communities.

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning. (art. 10 of the Convention)

10.6 Innovative projects

Academic curricula

Particular emphasis has been placed on the need to reform academic curricula so that children can leave primary school with a basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic. Accordingly, curricula and informal programmes have been redesigned to ensure that they more closely reflect local conditions and employment opportunities.

A number of pedagogical innovations have been introduced, with quite marked results, as described here below.

– A demographic studies programme has been implemented to teach children about preventive health and hygiene, the ways and means of avoiding pregnancy at school and abortion, protection against sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, and the advantages of family planning.

– Environmental education programmes are divided into two parts: the urban environment and the rural environment.

The subjects covered under the former include waste management and the issue of drinking water. Children are shown how poor hygiene can cause bacterial disease and how to obtain drinking water that is safe from the moment of collection to consumption.

– Voluntary ecology clubs monitor food safety, meaning the quality of food on sale, at school.

– "Clean school, green school" initiatives teach the importance of cleanliness and attention to appearance, introducing the concept that the school belongs to the community and thereby ensuring that the information given to children is passed on to the family and society at large.

[1] The word Nafa, in most of Guinea's dialects, means advantage, profit, boon.

- The main purpose of rural environmental education is to protect the environment (forests, creeks, wells and so on) against forest fires and deforestation, while promoting strategies such as home improvements and water purification techniques.

- The Enfant pour Enfant (Child to Child) programme provides younger children in experimental classes with an opportunity to learn new skills and habits of health and hygiene from older children.

All of these programmes, which have been tried out in a limited number of schools, have drawn on the following:

- Studies and research;

- New course design;

- Teaching methods development;

- Training of teachers and trainers;

- Evaluation exercises.

The above activities are backed up by awareness campaigns that are targeted at all levels (managers, teachers, parents, parent-teacher associations, community leaders, women, women's associations and the general public).

The Guinean association Enfant pour Enfant (Child to Child), in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has devised a strategy for the implementation of its programme through the Femme pour Femme (Woman to Woman) programme.

The latter programme encourages and teaches urban and rural women to take responsibility for the health and general development of their sisters, children and the other members of the community to which they belong.

Children are taught about the ideals to which the International Committee of the Red Cross aspires so that they may become more aware of the dangers and risks associated with natural disasters, wars and famine, and may develop a spirit of solidarity, a willingness to help others and a love of peace.

Centres for the study of applied arts and crafts technology provide children with the technological knowledge and practical skills they need to become useful members of society.

As part of the Basic Education for All initiative, a number of schools run rehabilitation and community support programmes devoted to the integration of children with disabilities into ordinary schools.

Interaction must be assured with target groups in the formal and informal education systems if the quality of basic education is to be improved.

Strategies aimed at improving subject matter, pupil-teacher ratios and learning conditions while also reducing school drop-out rates and developing education for disadvantaged groups (girls, rural children, women) help to make the Guinean education system both more attractive and successful.

The Guinean Women Teachers' Forum, the Guinean branch of the African Women Teachers' Forum, is an apolitical, non-for-profit, non-governmental

organization which received official accreditation pursuant to administrative Decree No. 07/MIS/CAB.

The object of the Forum is to mobilize the country's vital forces so that girls and women are able to participate effectively in Guinea's process of sustainable development.

It has carried out the following activities:

- Raising awareness about the education of girls in Guinea;
- Supporting the activities of the African Women Teachers' Forum;
- Holding discussions with women head and deputy-head teachers, senior teachers and counsellors at the municipal and prefectoral levels;
- Talking to female secondary school students about the importance of studying as a means of gaining entry into decision-making positions.

10.7 Constraints

The main constraints are outlined here below.

- The rate of illiteracy among women is high (85 per cent) compared to that for men (62 per cent).
- There is a low rate of school attendance among girls (35 per cent).
- Drop-out rates are high and girls tend to perform badly.

Technical and vocational colleges

The situation of female students in 1998

Schools	*Drop-out rate among girls*	*Female graduates*
Professional and vocational training centres	6 out of 278	60 out of 82
National agricultural and animal farming colleges	3 out of 124	42 out of 49
Community health care colleges	0 out of 338	179 out of 190
National School of Applied Arts and Crafts	3 out of 25	7 out of 7
National College for Physical Education	0 out of 4	-
State College for Waterways and Forestry Technicians	0 out of 12	3 out of 3
National School of Tourism and Hotel Management	0 out of 225	-
National secretarial colleges	113 out of 440	112 out of 126
National Post Office and Telecommunications College	0 out of 74	11 out of 14
National Primary School Teacher Training College	0 out of 134	-

Primary school data (1997-1998)

	Female	*Male*
Percentage in full-time education	36.9%	65.7%
Enrolment rate	33.8%	47.1%
Promotion to seventh grade	33.3%	43.5%
Percentage of students repeating a year or grade	29.2%	27%
Percentage of teachers by sex	24.5%	75.5%

The following figures illustrate how many women occupied positions as head or senior teachers in schools or institutes of higher learning in 1996:

Head of faculty	1
Head of teaching methodology	2
Grammar school principal	2
Primary school head	-

It is important to remember, while taking account of local realities, that gender equality plays a part in those areas of social life that are peculiar to education, a sector in which it is possible to gain access to decision-making positions.

Guinea has declared that one of the main objectives of its framework policy for education to the year 2000 is to raise the rate of primary school attendance of girls from 28 to 53 per cent by the year 2000. This reflects the priority importance that has been accorded to primary education, and the education of girls in particular.

10.7.1 Educational underachievement among girls

Generally speaking, the Guinean education system is characterized by a number of significant geographical and gender-related disparities.

Access to schools in rural areas, where 80 per cent of the population lives, is limited. Only 18 per cent of children of school age (five to 11 years) enrol at primary school, as compared with 54 per cent in urban areas.

Girls are poorly represented throughout the system, accounting for only 32 per cent of the whole. A mere 17 per cent of school age girls attend primary school, compared with 40 per cent of boys. Consequently, far fewer girls go on to further education. This is because parents, particularly in rural areas, often prefer to send their sons to school. Girls are kept at home to help their mothers look after younger children and do housework.

One solution could be to at least send the youngest girls in the family to school. The fact that as women these girls will be defined in terms of their role as mothers and housewives also helps to perpetuate this situation.

In the absence of any year-on-year statistical data, we have had to present the following table, to illustrate the problem of underachievement among Guinean girls, for the academic year 1990-1991 alone.

Table 1: Statistical analysis of the academic year 1990-1991

Description	*Primary school*	*Secondary school*	*Vocational and technical college*	*University*
Total number of students enrolled	346 807	98 300	66 900	450
Girls	109 351	24 575	17 394	820
Boys	237 456	73 725	49 506	6 630
Percentage of girls	31.53	25	26	11
Total number of students repeating a year or grade	75 362	18 677	6 690	-
Percentage of girls	22.96	14	7	-
Percentage of boys	21.15	12	6	

Source: Ministry of Education, Department of Planning and Statistics, 1991 Annual Report.

The above table highlights the substantial disparity between the total number of male and female pupils. The percentage of girls in education decreases steadily the further up the educational ladder one goes, falling from 31.5 per cent at primary level, to 25 per cent at secondary level and 11 per cent at university level.

School drop-out rates help to explain the phenomenon and in turn are caused by the following factors:

- Family income has fallen as the result of an ever worsening economic crisis;
- The role played by social, cultural and economic factors, including the attitude of some parents who believe that it is wasteful to send girls to school, since they will eventually get married and leave the family home;
- Premature pregnancy;
- The precarious state of the labour market demotivates students.

Over the period 1968-1987, out of a total of 2,390,500 women, only 27 per cent received literacy skills training through various programmes. Moreover, little consideration was given to the numbers and needs of women involved in general literacy programmes. Urban women benefited more from these programmes than rural women, because rural women's work leaves them no time for studying.

The programmes failed because no follow-up was done and there was no attempt to place them within the context of an overall strategy. In spite of efforts to replace traditional courses with functional literacy training, the number of centres and students varied from year to year, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 2: Literacy training in Guinea, 1984 to 1988

Year	*Number of centres*	*Number of persons targeted*	*Number of students*	*Number of women students*		*Percentage of women*
				Urban	*Rural*	
1984	846	25 400	20 675	5 500	500	29 %
1985	1 420	42 620	39 283	10 105	1 200	29 %
1986	1 537	46 125	36 286	11 200	2 500	38 %
1987	196	4 230	3 877	750	227	25 %
1988	254	5 052	-	-	-	-
Total		**123 427**	**100 121**	**27 555**	**4 427**	**32 %**

Source: Table taken from the tables contained in annex 2.3, page 23 of the document entitled "Elimination de l'analphabètisme en Guinée", which was presented at the workshop held in Dakar between 12 and 22 December 1988 under the auspices of the Regional Office for Education in Africa.

The table above shows how literacy training evolved in Guinea between 1984 and 1987. While the number of literacy centres and students increased between 1984 and 1986, there was a sharp fall in 1987. This can be explained by the closure of a number of institutions because of a shortage of operating funds and the indifference of the population (described more fully hereafter). In 1988, not one of the 5,052 persons selected for literacy training acquired the requisite skills.

Table 3: Primary school education, 1992-1996

Description	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
Total number of schools	2 586	2 779	2 849	3 118	3.237
Total number of classrooms	8 415	9 272	10 443	1 154	12 087
Total number of students	359 406	421 869	471 792	544 729	584 161
Female students	113 250	133 777	154 138	182 493	200 607
Total number of teachers	7 374	8 577	9 718	11 658	11 875
Women teachers	1 554	2 004	2 184	2 932	2 990
School attendance rate (per cent)	32	37	40	44	47
Pupil/class ratio	43	45	45	47	48
Pupil/teacher ratio	49	48	48	47	49

Source: DPSS/MESRS

UNICEF: Conakry. *Analyse de la situation des femmes et des enfants en Guinée*, p. 136. June 1990

Table 4: Secondary education, 1992-1996

Description	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
Total number of schools	235	244	252	300	306
Total number of classrooms	1 897	1 988	2 040	2 271	2 271
Total number of students	87 975	975 333	108 459	208 301	127 517
Female students	20 905	23 703	26 444	32 046	32 046
Total number of teachers	4 572	3 417	3 629	4 198	4 690
Women teachers	644	522	510	493	580

Source: DPSS/MESRS

Table 5: Gross illiteracy rate among heads of household by age, natural region and sex

Age group	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
15-19	54.6	82.4	68.5
20-24	59.6	84.1	71.9
25-29	59.9	88.0	74.0
30-34	51.0	86.7	68.9
35-39	55.7	89.2	72.5
40-44	57.1	92.3	74.7
45-49	69.7	97.1	83.4
50-54	75.8	98.8	87.3
55-59	72.5	99.1	85.8
60-64	75.1	98.7	86.9
65-69	79.5	99.8	89.7
70-74	66.3	99.1	82.7
75 and over	78.6	100	89.3

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

Natural regions	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
Conakry	38.6	66.2	52.4
Lower Guinea	67.9	93.4	80.7
Middle Guinea	59.3	96.0	77.7
Upper Guinea	78.8	96.2	87.5
Forest region of Guinea	66.9	93.0	80.0
Average	**64.8**	**92.2**	**78.5**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

XI. Equal access to employment

Article 11

(1) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

[...]

Access to employment

Women make up 51.3 per cent of the population of Guinea and are involved in all of the country's economic activities.

With regard to access to employment, the overall criterion used for recruitment in the public and private sectors in Guinea is individual merit. The General Statute of the Civil Service and the legal texts that regulate all phases of a civil servant's career, namely recruitment, promotion, training and retirement, contain no discrimination.

Likewise, the Labour Code provides that the private sector must guarantee equal access to employment on the basis of merit.

However, there is a huge discrepancy between the numbers of posts occupied by women at all levels and in all sectors of the economy, including the Civil Service, and the proportion of the population which is represented by women.

Both in rural and urban areas, an ever broader section of society is becoming impoverished. According to the Integrated Survey of Social Needs, 40.3 per cent of the population is living in absolute poverty (on an annual income of less than 293,714 Guinean francs per capita), while thirteen per cent lives in extreme poverty (on an annual income of less than 172,284 Guinean francs). Eighteen per cent of the rural population lives in extreme poverty, compared with 0.3 per cent of the population of Conakry and 5.6 per cent of those living in cities and in the interior of the country. The incidence of poverty among male-headed households is higher than among female-headed households (41.5 per cent and 29.7 per cent respectively).

However, a more detailed analysis shows that polygamous and de facto female households are the poorest.

The unemployment rate, estimated at around 7 per cent of the working population in 1986, soared to 15 per cent in 1991. In the 15 and over age group, the employment rates ranges from 66 to 71 per cent in rural areas to 53 per cent in urban areas (Socio-economic Development Support Programme, 1991). Unemployment is very high among young graduates of university and vocational training colleges. The reasons lie in the slowness of the modern sector to create employment and the mismatch between subjects taught and the needs of the labour market (National Population Programme, November 1997).

Failure to create employment and the dwindling number of jobs in the modern sector have contributed in no small measure to the spread of urban poverty. According to a 1992 study of unemployment and poverty in Conakry, the total unemployment rate, estimated at 19 per cent, is slightly higher if one includes women (20 per cent).

The problem hits graduates of further education looking for their first job particularly hard (32.5 per cent). The female unemployment rate among this category of job seekers is 87.5 per cent, as against 61.1 per cent for males.

Article 18 of the Constitution, which was mentioned above, protects women's equal right to work, guaranteeing them the same access to employment opportunities and the right to be judged according to the same selection criteria.

In spite of everything that has been achieved and the Government's best endeavours, major stumbling blocks remain, including, inter alia:

- The fact that most [Guinean] women lack self-confidence;
- The fact that women do not put themselves forward for promotion in the workplace and that there is little solidarity between women;
- The tacit reluctance of men to support women's self-realization.

Today, the majority of women work in the informal sector, from which they directly earn all or part of their income.

The law guarantees the right to freely choose one's occupation on the basis of individual merit.

Table 6: The current unemployment rate among persons aged 15 and over, according to age group, living environment, level of education and sex

Age group	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
15-19	54.6	82.4	68.5
20-24	59.6	84.1	71.9
25-29	59.9	88.0	74.0
30-34	51.0	86.7	68.9
35-39	55.7	89.2	72.5
40-44	57.1	92.3	74.7
45-49	69.7	97.1	83.4
50-54	75.8	98.8	87.3
55-59	72.5	99.1	85.8
60-64	75.1	98.7	86.9
65-69	79.5	99.8	89.7
70-74	66.3	99.1	82.7
75 and over	78.6	100	89.3

Living environment	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
Conakry	11.9	7.7	9.8
Other towns	8.3	3.8	6.1
Countryside	1.7	0.3	1.0

Natural regions	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
Lower Guinea	2.4	0.8	1.6
Middle Guinea	4.6	0.5	2.6
Upper Guinea	2.8	1.3	2.1
Forrest region of Guinea	1.9	0.6	1.3

Level of education	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
None	2.7	0.9	1.8
Primary school	5.9	3.4	4.7
Secondary school	9.8	10.3	10.1
Technical/Vocational	20.9	12.9	16.9
University/post-graduate	13.2	14.4	13.8
Average	**5.4**	**2.8**	**4.1**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

Table 7: Percentage of persons in active employment over the last 12 months, according to sex and employment status

		Employee	*Wage worker*	*Self-employed*	*Ancillary worker*	*Apprentice/ intern*	*Total*
Agriculture, hunting and related activities	Men	4.2	2.5	40.4	36.3	0.6	34.9
	Women	0.4	-	22.4	61.4	-	41.1
	Total	4.6	2.5	63.2	97.7	0.6	76.0
Mining	Men	5.7	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3
	Women	0.4	-	0.4	-	-	0.2
	Total	6.1	-	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.5
Manufacturing	Men	3.6	14.5	3.3	0.1	28.4	2.7
	Women	0.9	0.9	1.3	0.1	17.2	1.3
	Total	4.5	15.4	4.6	0.2	45.6	4.0
Water, electricity, gas	Men	2.5	-	-	-	0.3	0.1
	Women	0.1	-	-	-	-	0
	Total	2.6	-	-	-	0.3	0.1
Construction	Men	5.0	10.4	1.2	0.1	11.8	1.3
	Women	-	-	-	-	-	0
	Total	5.0	10.4	1.2	0.1	11.8	1.3
Commerce, repairs	Men	8.4	32.8	9.2	0.4	21.4	5.1
	Women	1.3	17.2	19.6	1.3	0.4	8.4
	Total	9.7	50.0	28.8	1.7	21.8	13.5
Transport, warehousing, communication	Men	19.5	9.3	0.7	-	14.4	1.8
	Women	0.7		-	-	0.4	0.1
	Total	20.2	9.3	0.7	-	14.8	1.9
Financial services	Men	4.1	4.3	0.2	-	0.4	0.3
	Women	2.1		0.1	-	0.5	0.2
	Total	6.1	4.3	0.3	-	0.9	0.5
Civil Service, defence, administrative social workers	Men	29.0	7.1	0.4	-	0.7	1.5
	Women	12.1	0.9	0.3	0.1	3.3	0.8
	Total	41.1	8.0	0.7	0.1	4.0	2.3
Total	**Men**	**82**	**81**	**55.7**	**37**	**78.2**	**48**
	Women	**18**	**19**	**44.3**	**63**	**21.8**	**52**
	Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Grand total		**154 247**	**9 870**	**1 308 837**	**1 785 719**	**136 818**	**3 395 491**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

Table 8: Percentage of the population in employment, according to age group and sex

Age group	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Total*
7-14	10.7	9.9	20.6
15-19	5.1	5.3	10.4
20-24	4.3	5.3	9.6
25-29	4.3	6.8	11.1
30-34	3.8	5.5	9.3
35-39	3.7	5.4	9.1
40-44	3.4	4.1	7.5
45-49	3.1	3.2	6.3
50-54	2.5	2.7	5.3
55-59	2.2	1.5	3.8
60-64	2.1	1.3	3.4
65-69	1.5	0.6	2.1
70-74	0.7	0.1	0.8
75 and over	0.7	0.1	0.7
Total	**48.2**	**51.8**	**100.0**
Weighted total	**1 659 473**	**1 785 423**	**3 444 896**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities; (art. 10 of the Convention)

Every worker has the right to promotion after a certain period of time.

Promotion may be given either on the basis of suitability for a particular position, or after training, further training or a competitive examination, once professional experience has been gained in the post concerned.

Decisions about promotion are one of the employer's prerogatives and constitute one of the main topics for discussion in collective bargaining negotiations with trade unions. Trade unions are very concerned about safeguarding the right to promotion without discrimination on grounds of gender.

Although the Civil Service and private sector have sought to recruit more women and also to promote them to senior posts and positions of responsibility,

their failure to do so on a regular basis has led to uneven progress. Moreover, clearly defined staff training and promotion programmes do not appear to exist.

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them. (art. 10 of the Convention)

Pursuant to paragraph 1, article 206 of the Guinean Labour Code, every employer is required to guarantee equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value, regardless of the origin, gender or age of his or her employees and under the conditions set forth under the relevant section of the Labour Code.

Article 207 provides that the various elements that comprise remuneration must be determined using identical criteria for both men and women. The categories and criteria used to grade jobs and grant promotion as well all the other elements constituting the basis for the calculation of pay, including job evaluation methods in particular, must be the same for both sexes.

Any clause that appears, inter alia, in a contract, collective agreement, wage agreement, wage settlement or salary scale drawn up on the basis of a decision of an employer or group of employers which, in contravention of article 206, and of paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 207, results for a worker of either sex in remuneration that is lower than that paid to workers of the other sex for the same job or a job of equal value, shall be deemed to be null and void.

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave; (art. 10 of the Convention)

The Republic of Guinea's Social Security Code is designed to protect employees and their families against any economic and social deprivation which may result from the loss or a sudden fall in their income.

Accordingly, article 2 of the Code provides as follows:

"The general social security system created pursuant to the present Law shall be organized and controlled by the State. It consists of several branches:

- Old age pensions;
- Invalidity and survivors' pensions;
- The occupational hazards branch, which is responsible for providing services the case of industrial accidents and occupational diseases;
- Family services;
- Sickness insurance;
- Health and social services;
- Any other branch which may be subsequently created by a decree of the President of the Republic upon the recommendation of the Minister for Social Affairs."

Paragraph 1, article 99 of the Social Security Code provides that child benefit shall be paid to insured persons for each dependent child up to a maximum of two children.

The number of children to which this benefit applies may be changed by decree upon the recommendation of the competent ministry.

Female employees are not entitled to family benefits, whether they work in the Civil Service or private sector.

In order to guarantee the stability of women's employment, the legislator has acted to make maternity one of the criteria for the suspension of an employment contract. The Labour Code contains a number of provisions whose purpose is to protect maternity, so that women workers may fulfil their dual roles as mothers and professionals without thereby impairing the principle of equality.

Some of its provisions are outlined here below.

Article 59

"A female employee has the right to suspend her employment contract for a period beginning six weeks before the presumed date of childbirth and ending eight weeks after the said date. In any case, a new mother may not be employed in the six weeks following delivery.

Where the birth takes place before the presumed date, the suspension of the employment contract may be extended until such time as the 14 weeks of the suspension of the employment contract to which the female employee is entitled have elapsed .

If a medically certified pathology resulting from pregnancy or childbirth so requires, the period of suspension of the employment contract shall be extended in accordance with the duration of the pathological state, but may not exceed a total of eight weeks prior to the presumed date of delivery or 10 weeks after the said date."

The right to paid leave is guaranteed to all workers without distinction. Article 163 of the Labour Code states that the period of paid leave shall be established on the basis of a collective concluded at the sectoral level. Such period may, by default, be established by the employer, based on previous practice and subject to consultations with trade union representatives.

Article 169

"The employer must take all effective measures consistent with the conditions of production in the enterprise to protect the lives and health of employees. He must, in particular, lay out premises and regulate working hours in such a way as to ensure the best possible protection of employees against accidents and illness.

The employer must involve trade union representatives in the formulation of hygiene and safety measures."

Article 160

"Save for more favourable provision under a collective agreement, the employee has the right to take leave paid by the employer on the basis of two and a half working days for each month of effective service. For the purposes of calculating the duration of leave, periods of effective service shall be taken to include periods of paid leave, training leave, absences arising from industrial accidents or occupational disease, and maternity leave.

Absences owing to non-occupational diseases or accidents under ordinary law shall be treated as periods of effective service according to the conditions set forth under a collective agreement."

Article 162

"The sick days and the maternity leave provided for under articles 59 and 60 and the holidays provided for under article 156 of the present Code may not be deducted from annual leave."

Article 164

"The employer must pay the employee, for the entire duration of leave, the full amount of salaries and compensation, excluding any expatriation allowance, which the employee would have earned, had he continued to perform his regular work."

The Republic of Guinea drew up the Labour Code in order to safeguard the rights and assure the protection of workers of both sexes. The Code, therefore, contains a special section devoted to the protection of female employees against any form of abuse by the employer in the case of pregnancy, maternity and illness.

Article 63 of the Labour Code provides that an employer may not terminate the employment contract of a female employee during maternity or unpaid leave, unless it can be shown that she has committed a serious error which is unrelated to the pregnancy or the employer is unable, for reasons unconnected with the pregnancy, confinement or maternity, to honour the contract.

Any contract which has been illegally terminated remains valid. The industrial tribunal or court which becomes seized of the matter must order the employer to reinstate the female employee, or, failing reinstatement, to pay her compensation corresponding to two years' salary.

(2) In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status; (art. 10 of the Convention)

Article 64

"A woman is free to terminate her employment contract without notice, either during pregnancy or after the birth of the child."

Article 65

"Violations by the employer of paragraph 1, article 59 and of article 62 [of the Labour Code] shall be punished by a fine of 30,000 Guinean francs, rising to between 60,000 to 600,000 Guinean francs if the offence is repeated."

Article 105 of the Social Security Code stipulates as follows:

"All female employees shall be entitled to a daily maternity allowance during maternity leave.

This allowance shall be paid for a period of 14 weeks, of which six following delivery, on condition that the insured person ceases all paid employment.

In the case of additional leave taken on the grounds of an illness relating to the pregnancy or delivery, the daily allowance may be paid for an additional two-week period.

Where delivery takes place after the presumed date certified by a physician, the period of leave already taken shall in any case be extended up to the effective date of delivery without in any way reducing the period of mandatory leave following delivery. In order to qualify for a daily maternity allowance, a female employee must have been covered by the National Social Security Insurance Fund nine months before the date of delivery."

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities; (art. 10 of the Convention).

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood has undertaken a review of the social services available to women and children in urban and rural areas of Guinea.

The exercise has cast light on the innumerable difficulties which women face when seeking to combine family obligations with work responsibilities. Although they are overburdened with work, urban and rural women are not provided with sufficient social support in terms of childcare. Childcare facilities are a relatively new thing in Guinea.

Preschool education comes under the remit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood. While it is not compulsory, the National Directorate of Preschool Education and the Protection of the Child has made it one of its goals to enrol as many two to six year-old children as possible in various types of educational establishment.

It should be noted, however, that the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood, within the framework of the Government's five-year cooperation programme with UNICEF for the period 1991 to 1995, opened the first community nurseries for small children in 1991. Sixteen centres were created in rural development communities, for the declared purpose of providing childcare facilities.

While no evaluation has been made of the results of the experiment, well-informed sources say that the centres have been hampered by real difficulties, particularly at the operational level.

In any case, the need to create public childcare facilities in both rural and urban areas remains a priority issue for the Gender and Development Framework Programme. It goes to the heart of the question of the psychomotor development of children as the future agents of Guinea's own development and to the imperative need to free up the energies of mothers. Such a strategy could also help, as has been shown in other countries of the sub-region, to promote equal access of boys and girls to schools.

Liberalization of the pre-school sector has thus far been limited to a few urban centres. The poorest members of society are largely prevented from gaining access to services, because they cannot afford to pay.

In Conakry, where almost 80 per cent of women work in public administration and the private and informal sectors, there are not enough facilities where women can leave their children during working hours. This is also true of the main cities of the interior.

The results of the Government's review exercise suggest that there is a need to support women by building childcare facilities and nurseries throughout the country.

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them. (art. 10 of the Convention)

Article 2 of Administrative Decree No. 1392/MASE/DNTLS/90 of 15 May 1990, concerning the work of pregnant women, guarantees special protection to women during pregnancy, as described hereunder.

A pregnant women may not be required to carry, pull or push, whether inside or outside of her regular place of work, loads weighing more than the following maxima:

1. A portable load of 25 kilogrammes;

2. A load transportable by railway wagon of 600 kg (including the engine);

3. A load transportable by wheelbarrow or trolley of 40 kg (including the vehicle).

The above provisions apply without prejudice to the provisions of articles 59 and 62 of the Labour Code which respectively recognize the right of a pregnant female employee to suspend her employment contract for 14 consecutive weeks, and of a working woman with a new baby to take a period of unpaid leave of no more than nine months after the period of annual maternity leave has expired.

Women account for only 22.21 per cent of all Civil Service employees. In terms of job categories, women account for 19.49 per cent of contractual staff, 34.63 per cent of operational staff, 22.80 per cent of middle managers and only 14 per cent of executive personnel.

A 1993 survey of the private sector carried out by the Ministry of Employment showed that of 17,483 persons working for 535 enterprises, barely 9.7 per cent of employees were women.

The foregoing is an overview of just some of the measures which the Guinean authorities have taken to eliminate stereotypes that have always been harmful to women and kept them in an inferior, if not subordinate, position to men. The truth is that when women are allowed to work under the same conditions as men, they can do as much, if not more, than men.

Women and the informal sector

Table 9: Number of women's enterprises included in the register of economic activities for the period 1 January 1996 to 2 July 1997

Municipalities/activities	*Kaloum*	*Dixinn*	*Matam*	*Matoto*	*Ratoma*	*Total*
Import-export	11	11	22	8	6	58
Retailing	7	2	6	3	5	23
Wholesaling	6	2	4	2		14
Apparel and dressmaking				2	2	4
Travel and tourism	2	1				3
Building and public works	1	3	3	1	3	11
Hotels, restaurants, bars, dance halls					2	2
Dry cleaning			2		1	3
Services	4	4	2	2	3	15
Cleaning/maintenance	1	1		2	2	6
Hairdressing					3	3
Transport			1		1	2
Industry	1		2	1		4
Poultry farming			1		1	2
Dyeing			1			1
Total	**33**	**24**	**44**	**21**	**29**	**151**

Source: Office for the Promotion of Private Investment, Business Administration Centre

As the above table shows, between 1 January and 2 July 1997, the situation of women registered with Business Administration Centre was as follows:

- Out of 1,421 economic agents, 150, or 11.26 per cent were women;
- Women were most active in the following sectors:
- Import-export, with the municipality of Matam (a district of Conakry) taking first place, followed by Kaloum and Diximm (a district of Conakry);
- Out of 150 women entrepreneurs, 43 were working in the municipality of Matam, 34 in Kaloum, 29 in Ratoma, 23 in Diximm and 21 in Matoto.

Table 10: Services

Sub-sector	*Women*	*Men*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
Hotels	15	32	47	31.91
Bars and restaurants	15	25	40	37.50
Bars and kiosks	12	43	55	21.82
Tourism and travel agencies	3	4	7	42.86
Private nurseries	46	51	97	47.42
Private schools (primary, secondary, vocational)	25	60	185	13.51
Bailiffs studios	3	43	46	6.52
Telecentres	37	6	43	86.05
Hairdressing	32		32	100.00
Cleaning, maintenance, caretaking	6	35	41	14.63
Refuse collection/disposal	4 500	900	5 400	83.33
Transport	25	126	151	16.56
Secretarial services/photocopying	68	61	129	52.71
Maintenance, transport	3	19	22	13.64
Total	**4 970**	**1 405**	**6 195**	**76.09**

Source: Various, including the National Directorate of Hotel and Tourism Services, the Department of Education, Office of Statistics, and the Office for the Promotion of Private Sector Investment.

Table 10 shows that in the services sector, women are mostly found in the sub-sectors described below.

- One hundred per cent of hairdressing salons are owned by women.
- Women dominate the waste disposal and collection sector, accounting for 83.33 per cent of all those employed in this area. The work is largely organized through women's associations, with a total of 4,500 women working in the various districts of the capital, as compared with 900 men.
- Women account for 52.71 per cent of all those employed in the secretarial and photocopying services subsector.
- They also have a significant presence in tourism and travel agencies (43 per cent), bars and restaurants (37.5 per cent), private nursery schools (47.42 per cent), and private primary, secondary and vocational schools (29.40 per cent).
- Eighty-six per cent of employees in telecentres, an entirely newly sector, are women.

In summary, an average of 77.32 per cent of all persons working in the urban services sector are women.

Women's health

Article 12

(1) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connexion with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

The 1984 National Health Conference took note the poor state of the health care sector and recommended the adoption of strategies which accord priority to preventive medicine, stress the importance of mass medicine over individual medicine and seek to tailor primary health care provision to specific national and regional circumstances.

12.1 National primary health care and essential medicines strategy

In 1988 Guinea launched its own national primary health care and essential medicines strategy and expanded programme on immunization based on the Bamako Initiative. Health policy was further refined in 1991 and 1994 and the country's national health strategy was reworked in keeping with the goal of health for all.

The strategy focuses on improving the health of mothers and children who are the most vulnerable members of society and contribute significantly to mortality rates. Its priorities include:

- The reduction of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality;
- Adequate immunization coverage against tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and measles.

Implementation through, inter alia, the introduction of a primary health care programme, has helped to expand health care coverage to include mothers and children as the primary beneficiaries of health services.

The monitoring data for 1995 show that vaccination coverage rates in the areas provided for under the primary health care programme were as follows:

Bacillus Calmette-Guérin	86%	Prenatal visits	53%
Triple vaccine	73%	Assisted deliveries	19.3%
Rouvax	69%	Improved consultations	23%
Vesicle amine transporter 2	56%		

Guinea's work in this area sets an example for the rest of the sub-region as to how the programme should be run. The former coordinator of the programme is currently working as a consultant for Gabon.

A mother and child health programme, designed and implemented in the framework of Guinea's expanded programme on immunization and primary health care and essential medicines strategy, has helped to improve the monitoring of pregnancy and childbirth among women of child-bearing age.

12.2 Other programmes

Encouragement has been given for the elaboration and implementation of several other programmes, all aimed at improving the general and nutritional health of women and guaranteeing them access to family planning services. Chief among these programmes are the following:

- Programme 1: Mother and child health and family planning;
- Programme 2: Elimination of nutritional and food deficiencies;
- Programme 3: Control of diseases, including STD's and AIDS;
- Programme 4: Education for health and social action;
- Programme 5: Improving water and basic sanitation;
- Programme 6: Upgrading of health care infrastructure;
- Programme 7: Strengthening sectoral institutions, particularly management skills development;
- Programme 8: Maternity without risk.

A national symposium was held to create the operational framework for the reproductive health concept.

While there is no sex-based discrimination in the legal texts through which Guinea regulates the organization of health and public services and the access thereto, the figures show that, in spite of every effort that has been made, gender inequality is a disturbing and enduring feature of everyday life.

Overall, the patient-health worker ratio in Guinea is far better than in neighbouring countries, with one doctor for every 7,000 patients. However, since specialization is rare among health professionals, there are very few specialists, health care managers or administrators. The population's health, and particularly the health of women, remains very precarious. In Guinea, as in all developing countries, women run a very high risk of dying during childbirth or because of complications during pregnancy.

Today, questions of reproductive health and risk-free maternity are once more coming to the fore, especially thanks to the efforts of international institutions and the Government to accord reproductive health its rightful place alongside the rights of the individual. Pregnant women are provided with care through a cost recovery system. They are also offered nutritional advice during pregnancy and lactation.

12.3 Institutions

The health care pyramid comprises two university hospitals, two industrial hospitals, 33 prefectoral hospitals, 30 of which have been renovated, 326 integrated health care centres spread over 346 sub-prefectures, 196 integrated medical posts out of 374, and five fully functioning municipal medical centres.

In the private sector, there are five pharmaceuticals wholesalers, 146 pharmacies, four biomedical analysis laboratories, 165 doctors' studios and 19 clinics.

Efforts have been made to bring health services to within a five-kilometre radius of patients. A programme has been put in place to train village midwives (to monitor the health of rural women), to distribute community-based services such as oral contraceptives and condoms, and to use community-based information systems in several villages to better monitor women and children's nutritional health. The programme does not cover all villages, however, and even where it does, shortages of technical equipment, lack of motivation and the failure to guarantee care on a regular cases mean that many women are left to give birth without any professional assistance.

Table 11 : Health institutions and medical personnel, 1995

Description	*Number*
Health institutions	**354**
Health centres	317
Hospitals	37
Medical personnel	**6 200**
Doctors and dentist	898
Biologists and biochemists	30
Pharmacists	194
Health technicians	209
Registered nurses	1 198
Pharmacy assistants	63
Midwives	359
Laboratory technicians	163
ATS	2 440
Contractual staff	646

Source: BEPR

Table 12: Evolution of national vaccination coverage (children)

Antigens	*1990 (EN)*	*1992 (DR)*	*1993 (DR)*	*1995 (DR)*	*1996 (DR)*
Bacillus Calmette-Guérin	57%	60%	76%	64.4%	66.03%
Triple vaccine	41%	52%	55%	55.1%	53.41%
OPV3	41%	52%	55%	54.4%	53.41%
Measles	39%	56%	57%	52.2%	55.41%
Vesicle amine transporter2	29%	51%	61%	43.3%	45.18%

Source: National Directorate of the Expanded Programme on Immunization

Table 13: Diseases targeted by the Expanded Programme on Immunization: changes in numbers of vaccinations and incidence of disease among all age groups between 1994 and 1996

	Measles		*Neonatal tetanus*		*Poliomyelitis*		*Diphtheria*		*Whooping cough*	
Year	*Cases*	*Incidence*	*Cases*	*Incidence*	*Cases*	*Incidence*	*Cases*	*Incidence*	*Cases*	*Incidence*
1994	3 568	58%	192	68%	63	1%	0	[illegible]	434	7%
1995	3 829	58%	229	77%	44	0.7%	0	[illegible]	157	2%
1996	14 314	199%	229	92%	44	0.61%	0	0%	157	3.65%

Source: National Programme for the Control of Aids in Guinea. Annual Report

Table 14: AIDS cases (cumulative figures for the period 1987 to 1996)

Year	*Cumulative number of cases*	*Men*	*Women*	*Children*
1987	8	8	0	0
1988	37	32	3	2
1989	109	87	18	4
1990	221	162	50	9
1991	443	327	97	19
1992	677	481	176	20
1993	1 005	691	293	21
1994	1 548	1 020	494	34
1995	2 158	1 345	767	46
1996	3 080	1 836	1 188	56

Table 15: Breakdown of cumulative AIDS cases for the period 1987 to 1996, according to sex and age

Age group	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Percentage of total*
0-4	27	20	47	1.5
5-14	4	7	11	0.4
15-19	25	43	58	1.9
20-29	417	556	973	31.6
30-39	897	443	1,340	43.5
40-49	410	114	524	17.0
50-59	85	26	111	3.6
60 and over	8	8	16	0.5
Total	**1 873**	**1 217**	**3 080**	**100.0**

Source: National Programme for the Control of Aids in Guinea. Annual Report

Table 16: Activities of health care institutions in 1995

Description	*Number*
Health centres	
First prenatal visit	1 554 576
Total prenatal visits	1 659 354
Total postnatal visits	438 056
Deliveries	44 014
Hospitals	
Consultations	390 092
Admissions	75 974
Beds	2 799
Deliveries	18 818
Maternal death (per 100,000 births)	565
Vaccination (children below the age of one)	%
Bacillus Calmette-Guérin	64.4
Triple vaccine1	65.2
Triple vaccine 2	59.9
Triple vaccine 3	55.1
Measles	53.2
Vesicle amine transporter*	43.3

Source: BEPR
*Pregnant women

Table 17: Principal reasons for medical consultations, 1995

Affection	*Percentage*
Malaria	9.12
Respiratory infections	4.34
Helminthiasis	4.28
Diarrhoeal diseases	3.13
Dermatological diseases	1.42
Genito-urinary diseases	1.40
Sexually transmitted diseases	0.42
Trauma	0.87
Anaemia	0.77
Eye infections	0.52
Malnutrition	0.36

Source: BEPR

Table 18: Principal reasons for hospitalization (in percentages)

Diseases	*Prefectoral hospitals*	*Regional hospitals*	*Major hospital centres*
Simple malaria	14.2	11.1	16.0
Pernicious malaria	4.3	6.2	4.0
Abdominal pain	10.3	11.9	11.0
Diarrhoea	6.8	7.0	10.0
Acute respiratory infection	6.4	5.9	5.0
Non-infectious gynaecological disease	5.4	5.7	5.0
Infectious gynaecological disease	4.2	5.3	4.0
Heart disease	4.1	4.6	4.0
Anaemia	3.8	4.5	4.0
Digestive tract disorder	3.2	3.0	3.0
Trauma	3.0	2.9	3.0
Intestinal parasites	2.4	2.5	2.0
Chronic respiratory infection	2.3	1.7	1.0

Source: BEPR

Table 19: Principal causes of death, 1995

Disease	*Percentage*
Pernicious malaria	10.0
Cardiovascular disease	8.0
Simple malaria	7.0
Anaemia	7.0
Acute respiratory infection	6.0
Acute abdominal pain	6.0
Diarrhoea	4.0
Malnutrition	4.0
Cholera	4.0
Trauma	3.0
Digestive tract disorder	2.0
Gynaecological disease	2.0
Neonatal tetanus	2.0
Tetanus	2.0

Source: BEPR

Table 20: Percentage of women or their partners in the 15 to 49 age group who use a method of contraception

Method used	*15-19*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*35-39*	*40-44*	*45-59*	*Total*
Not specified		1.9	0.7			0.9		0.5
Modern methods								
Pill	10.3	14.2	14.5	14	9.9	5.6	11.1	11.8
Condom	11.9	13	4	10	2.2	3		6.6
Intrauterine device	3.1	12	8.1	3.3	2.1			4.7
Injection		2.1	7	6.6	9.4	1.4	1.7	4.7
Sterilization		1	1.3		3.6	1.9	6.6	1.6
Traditional methods								
Periodic abstinence	35	20.7	14.5	12.7	13.1	18.3	11.9	17.7
Withdrawal						6.2	11.5	1.5
Abstinence	35.7	20.6	30.2	27.1	46.1	41	51.1	34.2
Other traditional methods	2.1	14.7	19.7	24.4	11.1	21	6.1	15.6
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Weighted total	**8 757**	**8 408**	**15 105**	**12 105**	**9 702**	**8 012**	**4 630**	**66 719**

The most common causes of maternal and infant mortality are malnutrition, haemorrhaging, malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhoeal diseases, multiple and closely spaced births, the absence of prenatal care, anaemia and AIDS. According to the National Programme For the Control of Sexually-Transmitted Diseases and AIDS, the prevalence of AIDS among women is particularly worrying: the gender ratio has gone from eight men for every woman in 1998 to three in 1996 and two in 1997. In percentage terms, this means that 56 per cent of AIDS sufferers are men, 41 per cent are women and 3 per cent are children.

The AIDS situation in Guinea

Total cases between 1987 and 1997	4,085
Total cases in 1997	1,005
Of those infected with AIDS:	
Men	56%
Women	41%
Children	3%
Average age of AIDS sufferers	26
Age group most affected:	
Men	30-39
Women	20-29

Incidence of HIV among adults	1.4-3.9%
Incidence among the general public (pregnant women)	1.8%
Persons infected with HIV	80,000-120,000
New AIDS cases each year	5,000-10,000
AIDS-related deaths each year	2,000-6,000
Total number of AIDS orphans	6,000-12,000
Incidence of HIV among prostitutes	32% (1996)
Virus types	
HIV1	87%
HIV2	5%
HIV1 + HIV2	8%

Malnutrition is the result of ignorance and food taboos. The incompetence of personnel responsible for assisting with childbirth can also be a cause of death (19.3 per cent of assisted births, according to the 1996 Statistical Yearbook). The percentage of pregnant women with access to health structures has risen steadily from 8 per cent in 1988 to 52.72 per cent in 1995 and 56.3 per cent in 1996.

Although much has been achieved in recent years, the state of the population's health is far from satisfactory.

The maternal mortality rate in Conakry is 500 per 100,000 live births, as against 900 per 100,000 live births in the interior of the country. The infant mortality rate of 137 per 1,000 and child mortality rate of 232 per 1,000 are among the highest in Africa. Life expectancy at birth stood at 47 years in 1982 and at 52 years in 1996.

Detailed analysis of available data show that existing disparities in the use made of services are a direct function of the level of supply. Women are more likely to go to health centres for problems relating to children's health and maternity, while men are more likely to use hospital services, clearly because their incomes are higher.

Added to this, human resources are both in short supply and poorly distributed, and there are not enough women in health care management. If the ratio of one doctor for every 7,000 patients and one nurse for every 1,500 patients places Guinea in a far better position than its neighbours, the patient-midwife ratio varies widely from one region to the other. If there is one midwife for every 3,808 inhabitants in Conakry, the corresponding figure for Middle Guinea is one for every 74,610 inhabitants (Department of Human Resources of the Ministry of Health, 1994). Likewise, the high degree of concentration of women doctors in Conakry and the other major cities works to the detriment of peripheral areas. The quality of services suffers in rural areas, where most prenatal care and family planning activities are managed by men.

In terms of the gender balance in health care management, there is a clear bias in favour of men. Out of three national managers one is a woman, while the figure at the prefectoral and municipal levels is three out of 38. One in two university hospital managers is a woman, while there is only one women hospital manager for every 35 prefectoral, municipal and regional hospital managers.

Guinea's primary health care programme and the implementation of the Bamako Initiative strategy place people at the heart of health promotion and

management. Its health policy is geared towards the strengthening of community participation.

Although women certainly have a central role to play in community health management, their average level of academic achievement largely precludes them from entering positions for which the ability to write is a basic prerequisite. The principles behind the work of health committees attach no importance to gender.

Although Guinea adopted its present national population policy in 1989, the cultural barriers to family planning persist, partly because of lack of information and partly because of resistance. Low levels of training, information and education among the general public and among women in particular reduce their access to health and population information.

The shortage of information, education and communication programmes about health and population matters, the problem of female illiteracy, and of limited access to family planning services increase the risk of premature, closely spaced and multiple pregnancies and perpetuate traditional practices that are harmful to the health of women, girls and children in general. The fact is that family planning services are available to only a small section of the population which lives near the 139 health centres offering family planning as an integral part of their services.

The Ministry of Health has a department of traditional medicine. Traditional practitioners are the first port of call for the rural population. In spite of the low cost of generic drugs under the national expanded programme on immunization and the primary health care and essential medicines strategy, 40 per cent of the population living below the poverty line cannot afford to pay for them. They are forced to resort to self-medication and traditional medicine, particularly in periods between the harvest and planting and in rural areas.

Numerous women's diseases can only be treated in their physical, social and moral environment (World Bank, Investing in Health, 1993). Modern medicine operates in a sector characterized by many other types of offer: self-medication and the informal market (the illegal sale of medicines on the parallel market). Women play a central role because of their knowledge of medicinal plants and the range of therapeutic experience and skills which they daily employ when assisting with childbirth, performing female excision, and treating both children and themselves. If their contribution were better allied to modern medicine, it would be possible to create a community health system that draws on women's know-how and enhances the attractiveness of available biomedical treatment. However, efforts to integrate this type of knowledge with modern medicine have so far been very tentative.

When family planning services were first introduced, access was dependent upon the prior consent of the husband. This is no longer the case. The husband's consent is required only in the case of surgical contraception, which is an irreversible procedure.

There are no laws that make it necessary to obtain the husband's consent in order to treat his wife. However, traditions and customs dictate that his views must be taken into account.

Abortion is illegal in Guinea, pursuant to articles 268 and 269 of the Penal Code, save for indications where the mother's life is at risk. Illegal abortions are performed, however, in contravention of these articles. According to a 1992 study

on maternal mortality carried out by the Guinean Society of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, 17 per cent of maternal deaths are the result of an abortion. Although genital mutilation is prohibited under article 265 of the Penal Code and article 6 of the Constitution, the practice is common.

Awareness campaigns by decision-makers, opinion leaders and non-governmental organizations have been conducted over many years.

Dietary restrictions are also imposed on children (they are not allowed to eat eggs, meat, fish in general or uncooked cassava (girls only)).

Guinea has a national policy for the control of sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Its corresponding national programme, set up in 1987, is working well. Around 10 women's non-governmental organizations concerned with AIDS control seek to educate all sections of society and provide care for persons infected with HIV. Women are just as involved as men, if not more so, in caring for the sick and for HIV sufferers in particular, because of the role they play in society as mothers, educators and carers.

12.3 Outlook

The 1997-2001 sectoral health policy sets out the strategies for a number of priority programmes, taking into account their impact on the health service system and on the improvement of the population's health, as described here below.

12.3.1 Priority programmes

The programmes described below were selected mainly on the basis of their impact on the health service and on improvement of the population's health.

12.3.2 Institutional reinforcement

Significant gains have been made in the health sector since the first reforms were first introduced in 1986.

However, many problems still need to be resolved. Institutional difficulties consist primarily of organizational and operational problems relating inter alia to community participation, intersectoral collaboration with health care partners, decentralization (making the district operational), integration of activities, legislation, regulation of the information system, and monitoring.

These are the areas which the institutional reinforcement programme must address, if health care management is to be improved.

12.3.3 Human resources development

The human resources development programme will meet the health needs of the population by enhancing the skills of Guinea's health professionals. The programme accords priority to planning, training and career management.

12.3.4 Integrated disease control

The integrated disease control programme has yielded very encouraging results over several years in terms of improved coverage, prevention, screening and care.

Programmes have been put in place for the most significant affections - malaria, diarrhoeal disease, acute respiratory infections, Hansen's disease, onchocerciasis and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS – and for the diseases targeted by the Expanded Programme on Immunization, namely diphtheria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, tetanus, measles and poliomyelitis.

Diseases which have the potential to create an epidemic, namely, meningitis, cholera and yellow fever, are closely monitored so as to reduce their impact on public health and the health service.

Plans to develop regional networks will improve the country's emergency response capability.

If past achievements are to be preserved and consolidated, it will be necessary to take action in the areas of institutional reinforcement, professional development, development of response capability in peripheral areas, the creation of an epidemiological monitoring network and of intervention mechanisms, the mobilization of material and financial resources, and efficient coordination of intersectoral activities.

12.3.5 Provision of medicines and essential vaccines

The programme focuses on the following areas:

- Strengthening support for Guinea's Central Pharmacy in the provision of essential medicines and vaccines to public health institutions;
- Subsidizing the supply of essential medicines and vaccines to health centres and hospitals;
- Facilitating the importation of good quality generics by private pharmaceuticals companies;
- Drawing up a pharmaceuticals pricing system that will make drugs accessible to the vast majority of the population without jeopardizing the survival of health care institutions;
- Encouraging local public and private companies to prepare galenics and manufacture essential medicines;
- Enhancing the effectiveness of pharmaceuticals surveillance.

12.3.6 Reproductive health

The International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in Cairo in 1994, defined reproductive health as the general physical, mental and social well-being of a human being in every area relating to the genital apparatus, including its functions and workings, and not just the absence of diseases or illness.

The new concept is far more comprehensive and goes beyond the traditional range of activities relating to monitoring of mothers' and infants' health. The concept applies not only to women and children, but also to adolescents, young persons and men.

Reproductive health provides an opportunity to change direction, offering all sections of society treatment that is tailored to their stage of development and particular circumstances.

With regard to Guinea's very high rates of morbidity and mortality associated with pregnancy, childbirth and abortion, coordinated action is planned at all levels of the system to guarantee risk-free maternity.

Improvements will be effected in provision of obstetrical services by introducing better evacuation techniques, upgrading the technical capacity of hospitals and staff training.

If reproductive health is to work, changes will have to be made to the current approach of programmes and existing structures. Other development sectors in the public and private sphere will have to become involved and a wider range of services will be needed. Service providers must be trained and the law will have to be changed. The programme will be developed taking into account the need to maintain overall continuity and to ensure equity.

12.3.7 Nutritional diseases and deficiencies

The rate of chronic malnutrition among children aged between three months and five years is 31.6 per cent, while the corresponding figure for severe malnutrition is estimated at 11.5 per cent.

Between 4 and 23.5 per cent of women have a below average body mass.

Some 18 per cent of newborns are of low birth weight and an average of 63.6 per cent of the population is affected by goitre.

Preliminary studies suggest that the rates of Vitamin A deficiency and anaemia suggest are likely to be quite high as well.

The programme for the control of nutritional diseases and deficiencies seeks to resolve these various problems through the following initiatives:

- The establishment of a system for monitoring children's growth at the community level and through health care institutions;
- Treatment of malnutrition using food supplements;
- Information and education for mothers and women about the nutritional value of local foodstuffs, breastfeeding and good weaning practices;
- Distribution of iodine tablets via health centres and community workers.
- Research into Vitamin A deficiency and anaemia.
- The creation of table salt iodizing centres in all production sites, and the strengthening of border controls.

12.3.8 Health research

One of the objectives of health policy is to improve the amount and quality of public access to health care, drawing on operational research designed to come up with practical and appropriate solutions to health care problems.

The National Programme of Essential Health Research is seen as taking an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to resolving key problems in the health field. As research capacity is still quite modest, efforts have focused on the following areas:

- Mobilization of additional funding for research activities;

- Creation and activation of structures and bodies for the implementation of the programme;
- Training of researchers as a way of widening the pool of qualified researchers;
- Publication and the use of research results in decision-making, the design of solutions to problems that have been identified and the improvement of the quality of public health care.

12.3.9 The urban health environment

With an annual population growth rate of six per cent, Guinea's cities have experienced rapid expansion.

Around 5,700,000 people, or 46 per cent of the total population, will be living in cities by the year 2010.

Nearly one half of urban dwellers or 2,800,000 people will be living in Conakry by the year 2010. Over 50 per cent of the population live below the poverty line (12,000 Guinean francs per capita per month).

The process of decentralization has not yet been completed and health coverage is limited (22 per cent).

This situation places considérable pressure on existing resources; health care, housing, water, electricity, refuse collection, telecommunications, transport, sewage.

Overcrowded homes are becoming run down, the environment is being destroyed and security is being undermined (alcohol and drug abuse, dangerous sexual practices and so on).

The consequences of these problems (cholera epidemics, infectious diseases, violence (gangs) and a poor quality of life) hit the poor hardest.

The urban health programme will focus on the following areas:

- The formulation of an integrated health development plan that will keep pace with urban transformation. Action will be directed towards resolving the problems of vulnerable groups and, as a basic minimum, will involve the implementation and expansion of primary health care programmes, improvement of referral systems, support for grass roots (community and private) organizations, the drawing up of a patients' charter to the year 2010 and the improvement of public hygiene.
- Integration of interurban communication networks such as the World Health Organization's healthy cities network, twinning schemes and so on.
- Development of intersectoral collaboration in the following areas: job creation, income generation and distribution, the development of moderately priced housing, the extension of water and sanitation networks, refuse collection, environmental protection, the promotion of community responsibility.

XIII. Social and economic benefits

Article 13

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

The Government established the National Social Security Insurance Fund as a central mechanism for social action on behalf of employees in the private sector and elsewhere. The institution is financed through employers' and workers' contributions. Since 1984, Guinea has had an integrated and efficient social insurance system aimed at all those who work in the country, without distinction on grounds of sex or job category.

The social security system consists of the following branches:

- Old age, invalidity and survivors' pensions;
- Occupational risks;
- Family allowances;
- Sickness insurance;
- Health care and social assistance.

Family allowances have been raised from 150 Sylis to 1,500 Guinean francs.

It should be pointed out, however, that women do not receive family allowances, because the laws in force make over such payments to the husband as the head of household.

A similar problem exists with regard to the reversibility pension of a women when she retires from work. The pension should go to the widower or their orphaned children.

The traditional insurance institutions which have come into being since 1984 take an increasing interest in providing social insurance without distinction on grounds of gender.

No detailed study has been carried out of the social services sector, which accounted for an average of 15.5 per cent of the public investment budget between 1987 and 1994. Structural adjustment programmes and the adoption of free market principles have seen the State retreat from the social (health) and economic sectors so that families are left to bear the costs. The additional financial burden coupled with spiralling inflation have put women under pressure to find money-making opportunities. The situation has given rise to growing levels of prostitution, higher rates of crime and falling rates of school attendance, particularly among girls. Urban women are finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet and rural women find that their economic activities can be taken over by men.

Women have no traditional right to full ownership of land, although no distinction is made between men and women in the Code of Real Estate and

Property Law. Women do have a right of usufruct, however, which allows them to work the family's land and to earn an income therefrom.

In the cities, the rights enshrined in the Code are guaranteed without discrimination. The same cannot be said for rural areas. This means that there is discrimination when it comes to ownership of property.

Moreover, loan conditions and the prices of inputs and equipment on the market restrict women's access to the factors of production.

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit; (art. 13 of the Convention)

Traditional credit institutions are uninterested in agriculture and other types of women's income-generating activities such as small-scale animal farming and the transformation of agricultural products and harvested goods. The difficulty of gaining access to the factors of production helps to explain the poor quality of certain products which are marketed by women. This places women at a competitive disadvantage and reduces their income levels. Credit instruments (mutual loans and so on) have been introduced, but have had little impact on women so far.

However, Decree No. 97/140/PRG/SGG does provide for the creation of a mutual credit scheme establishing a support fund for Guinean women's business activities, while Decree No. 98/142/PRG/SGG, concerning the establishment of a national solidarity fund, creates another mutual credit instrument.

Popular savings schemes consist of hoarding and the use of tontines. Support should be given for a programme aimed at mobilizing local resources and offering loans for women's micro projects. Investment and good project management are the motors of the development process.

As a number of social and economic studies of rural life have shown, peasant farmers in general and women in particular earn very little from agriculture.

This means that women are largely precluded from activities requiring their material and moral input, and hence from the economic and social development process itself.

With regard to the eradication of poverty, the Government and the UNDP have set up the Gender and Development Framework Programme whose main goals are to increase the income and improve the living conditions of urban and rural dwellers.

13.1 Credit institutions

Lending institutions fall into two categories: decentralized institutions (the Integrated Programme for Enterprise Development, mutual credit funds, rural credit funds) and the traditional commercial banking sector (Banque Internationale de Commerce et de l'Industrie de Guinée, Union Internationale de Banque de Guinée, Banque Populaire Maroco-Guinéenne, Banque Internationale pour l'Afrique en Guinée, and Banque Malaisienne).

Traditional institutions

Financial institutions offer their services without discriminating in any way between men and women. If women still have limited access to traditional banks,

decentralized credit institutions are the main sources of financing of women's economic activities.

The banking sector provides little in the way of financing for women's enterprises and, when it does so, funding is generally advanced through lines of credit operating from within the banks themselves.

The reasons why women have such limited access to traditional institutions can be explained by the following factors:

- The difficulty of coming up with the collateral required for credit;
- Ignorance of banking procedures and loan conditions;
- The size and informal structure of women's enterprises.

Decentralized credit institutions

Financial institutions disburse credit to male and female small business owners, offering them an opportunity for training in various areas of their business. They take a different approach, depending on the structure of the enterprise concerned.

Generally speaking, credit criteria and loan recovery procedures restrict women's access to financing.

Indeed, some women say that the loans have created serious problems for many families, occasionally causing great distress in a community when a family is unable to repay its loan.

These institutions do, however, have considerable local experience and generally recover over 90 per cent of credit disbursed.

Principal financial instruments

Rural credit

A rural credit scheme along the lines of the Grameen Bank was launched in 1986 with initial financing from the Caisse Française de Développment and the subsequent support of the European Development Fund and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). At present, the scheme has 57 banks throughout the country, offering the following products:

- Mutual rural credit (over 50 per cent of loans disbursed);
- Agricultural credit;
- Development project credit;
- Medium-term credit, valued at between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 Guinean francs.

Annual interest rates are set at 20 per cent for medium-term loans and 30 per cent for short-term loans.

One of the basic criteria for obtaining rural credit is that borrowers must belong to a group consisting of five members, each of whom acts as garantor for the other.

The network has local banks in rural areas, each capable of serving at least 10,000 people.

Women account for 50 per cent of rural credit recipients. Loans are offered for agricultural and retail commercial activities. The rural credit scheme is managed through lines of credit established by the PRODABEK, KAPATCHEZ, ACT and SNPRV projects, which all help to finance women's activities. A 14 per cent penalty applies to late payment and the five-year recovery rate is 97 per cent.

Mutual credit

The mutual credit scheme was launched in 1988 with the help of France's Ministry of Cooperation and the International Centre of Mutual Credit. It is mainly used for the commercial sector.

In order to secure a loan, a borrower must already have a deposit account.

The scheme, which is currently developing new products for urban craftsmen, operates through 45 banks in different regions of the country.

The annual rate of interest on a loan (borrowing rate) is 25 per cent. The total amount may be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The annual rate of interest on a deposit (lending rate) is 8 per cent. Women account for 12 per cent of mutual credit customers.

Integrated Enterprise Development Programme

The Integrated Enterprise Development Programme, which was launched in 1991 with funding from USAID and in collaboration with Volunteers in Technical Assistance, is comprised of two basic components:

- Training;
- Financing of micro enterprises in semi-urban areas.

In order to obtain credit, the borrower must agree to go through and pay for "spirit of enterprise" training. The Programme operates in various urban areas throughout the country and provides financing for non-agricultural activities (applied arts and crafts, small businesses, services and so on). Loans are provided at an annual interest rate of 30 per cent and in amounts ranging from 500 to 700,000 Guinean francs. The interest rate can be broken down into the following components:

- 10% to cover inflation
- 12 % to pay for services
- 2% for training
- 4% risk capital in case of death
- 2% guarantee fund.

It should be noted that both the Programme and the rural credit scheme provide amounts of less than 1 million Guinean francs, except in the case of medium-term credits. Unlike the mutual credit scheme, the borrower is not required to make a sizeable deposit in order to obtain credit from either the rural credit scheme or the Integrated Enterprise Development Programme.

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life. (art. 13 of the Convention)

The Human Development Index initiative may pave the way for the introduction of various projects that benefit women.

In terms of women's participation in recreational activities (leisure and cultural life), there are some very famous women in public life. Some of them are members of artistic and cultural groups, such as the Guinean Radio and Television Orchestra, the National Ballet and the National Theatre. There are also a few women actively involved in the literary world: a Guinean woman poet runs the African non-governmental organization of women writers.

Women do not participate in sports to any significant degree, although there are a few national, prefectoral or municipal women's teams. The Ministry of Education, taking account of the need to ally the development of children's mental health with their physical health and well-being, has reintroduced physical education as part of the school curriculum.

XIV. Rural women

Article 14

(1) States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

Rural women play a crucial role in the social and economic life of the family and of society, both as mothers and producers of goods. The fact that they are constantly at the family's beck and call does not release them from their other domestic or professional obligations (education and care of children; water and wood collection; preparation of food; agricultural work; small scale commercial activities).

The working day of a rural woman is long and hard. It lasts an average of 17 hours, eight of which are devoted to agriculture. Although conditions vary according to region, season and ethnic grouping, women's work is structured in a very similar way.

Table 21: Management of a Guinean rural woman's time

Time	*Tasks*	*Comments*
5.30 to 7 a.m.	Collect water, wash dishes, heat up water so that family members can wash.	The woman is assisted by those of her children who are old enough to work.
	Pound cereals for meals.	
7 a.m.	Leave for the fields.	
11.30 a.m. to noon	Have a meal.	
Noon to 5 p.m.	Work in the fields.	
	Stop work at 5 p.m. and go back to the village with condiments and food for the family.	
6 to 8 p.m.	Prepare the evening meal.	
	Heating water for family shower.	
8 to 10 p.m.	Shell peanuts, husk corn, spin cotton, weave fishing nets, make baskets.	Women are helped by all of the family.
10 to 11 p.m.	Evening entertainment (stories and legends).	Girls and young people organize dancing under the moonlight.
11 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.	Bed.	

Source: UNICEF, Analysis of the situation of women and children in Guinea, Conakry, June.

The way that rural women manage their time depends upon the season and the environmental circumstances.

During the dry season, in addition to regular household chores, they are mainly occupied with harvesting and making repairs to living quarters.

However, women's contribution to economic and social development is largely ignored or undervalued. Women do perform a variety of tasks which are as much to do with production as with home economics.

While reaffirming the general thrust of national development policy, the President's Address to the Nation on 22 December 1985 paved the way for the introduction of a policy of decentralization and for the development of the associative movement. It also confirmed the priority importance of agriculture.

The Government, determined to assure the development of Guinea's agricultural sector, adopted an agricultural development policy programme with several components designed specifically for women.

The 1985-1987 interim plan of national recovery stressed the need for women to participate in the economy by supporting income-generating activities and natural and human resources management.

In spite of the particularly difficult circumstances, Guinean women have lost none of their dynamism. Although rural women are relegated to traditional tasks, they could become involved in more profitable individual and group activities, if

they were better trained. Rural women need financial resources as well as training and education in a variety of subject areas.

(2) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development, and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels; (art. 14 of the convention)

Agriculture employs a significant proportion of the working population, more of them women than men. On average, there are 144 women for every 100 men working in the sector. Agriculture assures the survival of 80 per cent of the population and provides employment for 87 per cent of all working women. Women's share of income from exploration [sic] rose from 3.6 per cent in 1991 to 15 per cent in 1994, with women accounting for 2 per cent of all those in the sector (Agricultural Survey Series, 1995). The agricultural workforce relies heavily on the family and is generally made up of the total number of persons directly involved in farming.

Table 22: Women in agriculture, by region

Region	*Female population*	*Total population*	*Percentage of women*
Boké	208 727	418 047	49.93%
Faranah	179 895	359 840	49.99%
Kankan	289 494	564 554	51.28%
Kindia	271 361	547 851	49.53%
Labé	308 976	594 638	51.90%
Mamou	188 137	351 672	53.50%
N'Zérékoré	318 222	642 443	49.53%
Total	**1,764,812**	**3 479 045**	**50.73%**

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Table 23: The female agricultural workforce, by age

	Women		*Total*	
Age group	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
10- 14	101 384	10.13	241 793	12.77
15-19	134 097	13.40	281 380	14.86
20-24	117 747	11.77	207 020	10.94
25-29	149 612	14.96	222 019	11 73
30-34	113 096	11.30	175 080	9.25
35-39	128 401	12.83	193 445	10.22
40-44	86 446	8.64	145 317	7.68
45-49	67 495	6.75	127 912	6.76
50-54	49 972	5.00	103 772	5.48
55-59	23 724	2.37	78 315	4 14
60-64	21 251	2.12	65 767	3.47
65-69	5 839	0.58	35 164	1.86
70-74	645	0.06	7 449	0.39
75 and over	701	0.07	8 582	0.45
Total	**1 000 400**	**100.00**	**1 893 015**	**100.00**
Percentage	**53.32**		**100.00**	

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Guinean women lost considerable ground during the colonial period as a result of the transformation of production methods, the monetization of society, the introduction of cash crop cultivation and the consequences to which it gave rise, namely mechanization, the adoption of new technologies, cooperatives and rural credit schemes. The traditional division of labour between men and women was transformed. Men took over commercial production, while women were left in charge of domestic production, particularly of market gardening and coffee and cocoa growing. The means of production which hitherto had been considered as belonging to the entire family or clan now passed into the hands of influential men.

Women became more impoverished as food production, an area over which they had traditionally had control, passed out of their hands and opportunities for marketing their products began to shrink. Whether women were farm managers, because the men had either emigrated in great numbers or had died, or just workers in the family fields, they found it increasingly difficult to obtain inputs and credit, to master modern technology and to find remunerative employment.

Caught between environmental degradation, a reduction in the quantity of available arable land, the stagnation of food production and demographic pressure, Guinean women producers, like their male counterparts have become severely impoverished. Various economic crises, coupled with structural adjustment programmes and other restrictive measures, have increased the pressure on the most

vulnerable groups and accelerated the decline in women's standards of living. The economic data provided here below show that the economic gap between Guinean men and their sisters, wives and mothers remains as wide as that which exists in the area of decision-making.

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning; (art. 14 of the Convention)

At the institutional level, the National Directorate for the Promotion of Women is essentially responsible for identifying women's needs, formulating social and economic programmes, coordinating the provision of technical assistance to individual women and women's groupings, raising money, and organizing vocational training, education and information activities tailored to women's social and economic needs.

Support for the implementation of programmes and projects is provided by a number of donors, most notably, the UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, USAID, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the European Union, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the Governments of China, Japan, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden. The programmes are largely concerned with providing institutional support to the Ministry and assistance to rural women.

The Women, Population and Development project (FPD/GUI/94/PO3), set up and run by UNFPA, and the Fouta Djallon rural development project are cases in point. The latter seeks to improve the situation of women by encouraging women and men to become involved in fish manufacturing and marketing as a part of the overall development of the private fishing sector.

The German Agency for Technical Cooperation is also running a rural development project in Kissidougou which targets small farmers, village craftsmen and women.

The Fund for Aid and Cooperation, with the cooperation of the Government of Canada, the World Food Programme, the UNDP and others, supports market gardening collectives through financing and purchasing of fertilizers for the start-up phase.

UNICEF supports the activities of the Nafa and women's self-help centres in areas such as education, dressmaking and embroidery.

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation is responsible for coordinating rural development work at the national level. Unfortunately, several of the women's support programmes are limited in scope and can do little to advance the situation of women.

Business groupings are rare. Around 83.5 per cent of economic activities are carried out by individuals (or households), as against only 16.5 per cent by business groups. Trading groups account for 19.6 per cent of the commercial sector and include a significant number of women. Around 9.8 per cent of groupings are credit

institutions, offering their members loans in the form of tontines. Another 8.9 per cent are non-governmental organizations (Rural Women and Development, 1996).

There are three types of organization working in the field. Women's organizations, which are women members only, are very common in rural areas, but are still not particularly efficient. Men's organizations are less common, although some mixed organizations with both male and female members are beginning to make an appearance. An estimated 10 per cent of the latter are run by women.

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes; (art. 14 of the Convention)

Although Guinean women do play an important role in the economy, they lack the training to be able to appraise and evaluate their own production activities. They have not got the skills needed to design income-generating projects, and, even when they do come up with projects, they find it difficult to get funding. The State has yet to put in place a credit and financing mechanism that can support women's micro enterprises. Credit lines provided by various donors go unused, because they are organized through commercial banks whose concerns and lending criteria, namely the need to provide traditional forms of collateral, the level of personal investment required, the complexity of procedures, the bureaucracy involved and the bureaucratic mentality of credit managers, are ill-suited to women's needs.

For women, traditional tontines remain the principal source of liquid capital.

A tontine is a voluntary system of group savings which allows each member to draw on interest earned on the principal in order to pursue an economic activity. The members establish the total amount of the loan and the system of rotation. It is a system which relies on individual commitment and trust.

Around 100 per cent of loans provided to women under the Integrated Rural Development Programme and rural and mutual credit schemes are reimbursed, despite the exorbitant interest rates applied.

It is difficult for rural women to gain access to land. This area is regulated by the Code of Real Estate and Property Law and by customary law, neither of which favour women in matters of succession. Moreover, since land has a very high commercial value, the fact that women do not have access to capital places them at an even greater disadvantage.

Women find it very difficult to obtain material and agricultural resources, inputs (seed, fertilizer) and services (information and technical training).

Table 24: Women farm managers, by age group

Age group	*Total (A)*	*Women (B)*	*Percentage*	*Ratio (B/A)*
-25	7 236	929	10.48%	12.8%
25-34	56 012	1 105	12.47%	2%
35-44	107 397	2 083	23.51%	2%
45-54	110 579	1 525	17.21%	1%
55-64	103 706	2 566	28.96%	2%
65 and over	57 237	653	7.37%	1%
Total	**442 167**	**8 861**	**100%**	**2%**

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Table 25: Women farm managers, by region

Region	*Farm managed by a woman*	*Percentage*
Boké	494	6%
Faranah	215	2%
Kankan	0	0%
Kindia	197	2%
Labe	3 129	35%
Mamou	4 434	50%
N'Zérékoré	392	4%
Total	**8 861**	**100%**

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

The fact that most rural women are illiterate (85 per cent, according to the Health and Population Survey) is largely the result of years of educational underachievement among girls. This in turn makes it difficult to increase productivity, largely precluding women from active participation in various areas of development including the formulation and implementation of development programmes.

In spite of the fact that rural women tend to be illiterate and do not have access to decision-making positions, they do contribute actively to the social and economic development of rural development communities.

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency; (art. 14 of the Convention)

In the area of health, the various components of the Mother and Child Health Forum and Family Planning Programme are already being developed throughout the country. Guinea has applied the principles of the Bamako Initiative and the essential medicines policy through its expanded programme on immunization and primary health care and essential medicines strategy which was launched by the Government in 1988 with the cooperation of UNICEF and the support of numerous donors.

Unlike urban working women, rural women are not covered by social security. Plans have been made to research the level of need.

The Bamako Initiative seeks to mobilize resources using community financing and maximizing programme resources to improve the quality of service provision. In this, women and children are targeted as the prime beneficiaries.

Guinea's expanded programme on immunization and primary health care and essential medicines strategy was designed to revitalize health centres through upgrading of infrastructure and equipment, staff training and the provision of essential medicines.

A management committee, whose members are elected by the community, is responsible for promoting community involvement.

In each of the 346 health centres a minimum package has been put in place, consisting of pre- and postnatal care, assistance with delivery, vaccination, monitoring of children's growth, treatment of major illnesses, family planning services and dispensing of essential medicines. Additional areas of concern that are being incorporated into the package relate to prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, oncherocerciasis, water purification and sanitation, laboratory services, management of epidemics and a system of community-based nutritional surveillance.

Another part of the programme focuses on the vaccination of children aged between 12 and 23 months and of pregnant women.

(e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment; (art. 14 of the Convention)

The Government and communities attach importance to the drinking water supply, a particular problem for women since it is they who are forced to travel long distances each day to collect water.

In 1980, the National Department for the Installation of Water Points in Rural Areas was set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture to design and install hydraulic systems in Guinean villages. Rural women greatly appreciate the results of the Department's work throughout all areas of the country.

Table 26: Production and distribution of water

Centres	Subscribers as of 31 December 1996	Production (in cubic metres)				
		1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Conakry	24 947	5 053 359	6 603 274	14 189 253	12 367 236	11 072 255
Prefectures	10 040	2 020 736	2 495 413	1 333 353	1 301 933	1 357 140

Source: Société d'Exploitation des Eaux de Guinée

Table 27: Current sources of domestic water supply, according to place of residence

Sources	Conakry	Other urban centres	Rural	Total
Tap	79.0	33.0	0.8	18.7
Ordinary well	19.3	45.5	21.3	24.5
Drill well	-	10.4	25.3	18.9
Stream/river/lake	0.1	4.3	33.8	23.8
Spring	0.6	5.9	18.5	13.7
Water vendors	0.5	0.6	-	0.2
Others	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3
Not specified	-	0.1	-	-
Not applicable	-	-	-	-
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Weighted total	**161 628**	**138 311**	**655 817**	**955 776**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

Table 28: Percentage of households with access to drinking water, according to place of residence, natural region and socio-economic group

Place of residence	*Percentage of households with access to drinking water*
Conakry	79.5
Other cities	49.5
Rural areas	44.7
Natural regions	
Conakry	79.5
Lower Guinea	42.5
Middle Guinea	45.2
Upper Guinea	47.1
Forest region of Guinea	47.5
Socioeconomic group	
SEG 1	39.5
SEG 2/3	44.5
SEG 4	75.6
SEG 5	73.4
SEG 6	66.3
SEG 7	61.0
SEG 8/9	55.3
SEG 10	54.1
Total	**51.2**

Source: Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, 1994

Table 29: Installed capacity and output of power plants (MW)

Description	*Installed capacity as of 31.12.1996*	*Production (megawatts)*		
		1994	*1995*	*1996*
Hydroelectric power plant	**52.1**	**221 792**	**244 118**	**239 000**
Great Falls	27.0	117 920	135 429	131 755
Donkéa	15.0	72 952	79 089	77 504
Baneah	5.0	10 605	8 970	9 080
Tinkisso	1.5	6 102	6 875	7 384
Kinkon	3.2	14 212	13 302	12 589
Samankou	0.2		172	453
Loffa	0.2		281	235
Electricity power stations	**49.6**	**55 556**	**37 609**	**71 812**

Description	*Installed capacity as of 31.12.1996*	*Production (megawatts)*		
		1994	*1995*	*1996*
Tombo 1	28.8	36 725	18 020	45 264
Tombo 2	10.5	14 029	15 548	20 694
Others	0.4	495	585	301
Miscellaneous	9.9	4 307	3 456	5 553
Total	**101.7**	**277 347**	**281 727**	**310 813**

Source: Guinean Electricity Board

(f) To participate in all community activities; (art. 14 of the Convention)

In semi-urban areas, Guinean women spend much of the day collecting water and wood, preparing food and performing other tasks which may differ from one natural region to another, but which all relate to their reproductive functions and involve men hardly at all. Studies have shown that 45.5 per cent of Guinean women are responsible for collecting wood, as compared with only 31.7 per cent of men. Some 73.5 per cent of women collect water, while 68.7 per cent cook and 52 per cent go to the market.

Women are also expected to do other household chores such as washing, looking after and educating children and caring for older persons. A significant proportion of a Guinean woman's day is therefore taken up with production. According to the Integral Survey of Consumption Needs, Guinean women spend about 42 minutes a day looking for firewood and 43 minutes fetching water. Marketing and cooking take up 50 minutes and one and a half hours respectively. Other tasks take around 43 minutes. In rural areas, women spend 17 hours per day doing household chores.

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes; (art. 14 of the Convention)

Data taken from a number of studies show that out of 69,429 borrowers, only 20.85 per cent were women.

Tontines are the most popular form of credit, and 41 per cent of users are women. Since women account for only 1 per cent of all those who receive credit through mutual credit schemes or non-governmental organizations, it is clear that these two sources favour men. The following table illustrates the main trends:

Table 30: Beneficiaries of credit according to source and sex

	Beneficiaries			
Source of credit	*Total*	*Per cent*	*Total number of women*	*Per cent*
Rural credit	11 844	7.06	3 099	21.41
Mutual loans	1 331	1.92	145	1.00
Non-governmental organizations	946	1.36	145	1.00
Tontines	14 636	21.08	5 971	41.25
Project	6 527	9.40	481	3.32
Village banks	5 791	8.34	2 143	1.480
Friend/usurer	28 354	4.084	2 492	1.721
Total	**69 429**	**100.00**	**14 476**	**100.00**
%	**100**		**20.85**	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture data, 1995-1996

Rural women are mainly employed in the informal sector which covers all types of occupation including commerce and uses both traditional techniques and technology that have been refined thanks to the transfer of know-how.

Although there has been some slight improvement in rural women's lives, it is regrettable that they have so little access to the factors of production, namely, land, inputs and credit.

The exercise of preparing the current report on the implementation of the Convention has underscored the need for action to redress the imbalances that have been identified and to waste no time in implementing the many ideas and projects which the Gender and Development Programme proposes in the interests of women. A committee or monitoring body should also be set up to provide operational support for the implementation of the Convention.

Table 31: Women who work out of doors, according to employment contract

	Permanent workforce			*Temporary workforce*		
	Women			*Women*		
Region	*Total*	*Per cent*		*Total*	*Per cent*	*Total*
Boké	0	0.00	3 050	131	10.38	1 262
Faranah	337	3.46	9 743	1 638	12.70	12 896
Kankan	0	0.00	2 416	2 101	18.27	11 498
Kindia	0	0.00	3 699	2 037	20.15	10 108
Labé	0	0.00	3 543	2 637	37.15	7 099
Mamou	0	0.00	2 749	260	16.93	1 536
N'Zérékoré	0	9.00	1 124	7 582	22.43	33 796
Total	**337**	**1.28**	**26 324**	**16 392**	**20.70**	**79 195**

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Table 32: Agricultural equipment operated by women, according to type and ownership

	Rented or loaned			*Owned*		
	Operated by women			*Operated by women*		
Agricultural equipment	*Total*	*Per cent*		*Total*	*Per cent*	*Total*
Hoe/spade	16 358	27.5	59 562	888 330	29.7	2 990 354
Hand or mechanical saw	5 292	18.3	28 870	203 348	13.7	1 485 343
Axe	1 178	9.3	12 689	190 694	19.3	988 083
Sickle	4 054	12.2	33 206	216 307	17.0	1 269 806
Watering can	2 448	51.2	4 776	28 317	38.3	73 841
Wheelbarrow	0.0	0.0	2 102	985	3.6	27 102
Plough	586	5.5	10 702	842	0.6	132 727
Animal-drawn cart	186	13.3	1 397	372	4.2	8 836
Harrow and oxen	196	2.8	6 949	525	1.0	52 856

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Table 33: Total number of farms in which equipment is used by women, with types of equipment

Agricultural equipment	*Farms where equipment is used by women*		*Total number of farms where equipment is used*
	Total	*Per cent*	
Hoe/spade	312 804	71.6	436 816
Hand or mechanical saw	145 545	35.8	406 297
Axe	191 894	46.9	409 534
Sickle	108 512	31.7	342 357
Watering can	19 546	44.8	43 620
Wheelbarrow	985	4.2	23 218
Plough	2 603	2.7	96 244
Animal-drawn cart	1 114	15.8	7 047
Harrow and oxen	1 453	3.1	47 057

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

Table 34: Surface area cultivated under the supervision of a woman (in hectares)

Region	*Plots cultivated under the supervision of a woman (in hectares)*		*Total surface area of cultivated land*
	Surface area	*%*	
Boké	19 007	19.6	96 880
Faranah	7 448	6.3	117 556
Kankan	517	0.3	197 536
Kindia	5 512	3.8	144 577
Labé	23 238	23.7	98 220
Mamou	21 326	28.3	75 324
N'Zérékoré	17 366	10.5	165 519
Total	**93 959**	**10.5**	**895 620**

Source: National Department of Agricultural Statistics, *Part de la femme dans les activités de production en milieu rural, 1995*

The informal sector is the exclusive preserve of rural women. It covers all trades from traditional crafts to small scale modern manufacturing, as well as small businesses and the private services sector. Hence, traditional soap production is an activity in which Guinean women throughout the country take part. Women have a perfect knowledge of traditional techniques that been refined using formulas and technologies imported from neighbouring countries. Non-governmental organizations such as the Guinean Association of Women Researchers teach women

how to improve traditional methods of salt production by using solar energy instead of the traditional fuel, firewood. Not only is this good for the environment, it also makes it easier to produce the salt by reducing the time taken for the water to evaporate. It also protects the salt against pollution from waste matter.

XV. Equality before the law

Article 15

(1) States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

15.1 Equal rights

Women in the Republic of Guinea have the same legal rights as men. There is no question that the laws and regulations in force go a long way towards affirming the dignity and social equality of women. It is in this spirit that Guinea has signed, acceded to and ratified a number of international legal instruments advancing the rights of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women whose article 2(f) calls upon States Parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.

Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the Guinean Constitution. In the preamble of the Basic Law, adopted in December 1990, the people of Guinea proclaim the equality of and solidarity with all Guinean nationals without distinction as to race, ethnicity, sex, origin, religion and opinion, and their adherence to the ideals and principles, rights and duties established in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the Organization for African Unity and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights.

Article 8 of the Constitution, which was referred to above, further provides that all human beings are equal before the law and that no one may be accorded privileges or suffer disadvantage on account of his or her birth, race, ethnicity, language or political, philosophical or religious beliefs and opinions.

Finally, article 22 of the Constitution stipulates that the law guarantees to all the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms and determines the conditions under which such rights are exercised.

In practice, the economic status of women determines the extent to which women are able to benefit from equality before the law. In the majority of cases, women depend on their husbands.

De facto inequality perpetuates the notion of men's superiority over women.

Articles 360 to 403 of the draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law stipulate provisions relating to marriage settlements.

Article 360 provides as follows: "In the absence of a marriage contract, the marriage settlement shall be based on joint ownership of property by both spouses. In the case of polygamy, the spouses shall be subject by law to a system of separation of property."

Any joint property, other than the wages, salaries and incomes of each spouse and goods acquired in the exercise of a separate profession, may be administered by either spouse (art. 482).

(2) States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals (art. 15 of the Convention)

15.2 Legal capacity of women

A woman has legal capacity under Guinean law and enjoys all civil, civic and political rights on an equal footing with men. She is able to exercise these rights independently, without necessarily requiring assistance or representation, unless she is a minor or suffers from habitual imbecility, dementia or mania. This is a general legal precept which applies equally to women and men (article 444 of the Civil Code). Pursuant to article 443 of the Civil Code, a person reaches their majority at 21, at which age a woman has legal capacity in all civil matters.

In practice, women find it difficult to exercise their rights because of illiteracy, their low levels of income and the fact that they are women.

The political will is there, however, as confirmed by the establishment of legal aid and listening centres, the implementation of a national plan of action, the formulation, in October 1996, of a national policy for the advancement of women, the drawing up of the Gender and Development Framework Programme in collaboration with the UNDP (approved in 1998), and the development of partnerships with civil society. Legal measures taken in this area are described hereunder.

- A support fund for Guinean women's business ventures was established by Decree No. 97/140/SGG of 19 June 1997.
- Decree No. 97/141/PRG/SGG was issued on 19 June 1997, providing for the creation and organization of legal aid centres to serve the needs of Guinean women.
- A national solidarity fund was created pursuant to Decree No. 98/042/PRG/SGG.
- The implementation decrees which give effect to the aforementioned legislative texts have been drafted and submitted for signature to the competent authorities.

With respect to the protection of women's rights, the legislator supports women's right to freely engage in economic activities as an established prerogative in Guinea. Only two conditions are imposed:

- The need to observe general laws and, in particular, the Code of Economic Activities;
- The need to comply with the laws which govern the particular type of activity being pursued.

Apart from these two restrictions, the Code of Economic Activities guarantees women in general and married women in particular the same right as men to engage in economic activity. Women also have the same responsibilities.

Article 6 of the Code stipulates as follows: "A married woman may carry out an economic activity without her husband having any right to object thereto." In this regard, it should also be recalled that married women were already recognized as having full legal capacity under the Code of Commercial Activities, which implicitly abrogated article 328 of the Civil Code.

However, a married woman's freedom to dispose of property may be subject to certain restrictions by virtue of her statutory or contractual marriage settlement. These restrictions are recorded in the register of business activities.

Finally, the Code stipulates that a married woman is not considered to be carrying out an economic activity, unless she does so independently of her husband.

This is a precept that is already embodied in Guinean law (article 17 of ordinance 063/87), which provides that a woman who works in the same activity as her husband is considered to be an assistant. It may help to protect a woman's rights, if the marriage settlement is based on separation of property.

However, some women may find that their economic and financial independence plays a part in the dissolution of their marriage.

Lack of public information can reduce opportunities for women to engage in economic activities.

(3) States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void. (art. 15 of the Convention)

15.3 Conclusion of contracts

Article 660 of Guinea's Civil Code provides as follows:

"Any individual may conclude a contract so long as he or she has not been declared incapable by the law.

The following persons are incapable of concluding contracts under the conditions prescribed by law:

(a) Minors within the meaning of articles 399 to 422 of the present Code;

(b) Adults protected within the meaning of articles 444 to 459 of the present Code.

A person capable of concluding a contract may not dispute the capacity of any person or persons with whom he or she has concluded a contract.

This provision applies only to relations created between contracting parties."

The aforementioned provisions of the Civil Code show that the legislator has accorded women the same right as men as regards the conclusion, procedures for and execution of contracts.

The legal effects arising from the conclusion of a contract apply without distinction to all of the contracting parties.

The fact that Guinean law is silent when it comes to marriage settlements complicates the task of administering a couple's property.

The legal void is filled by a consistent body of customary law which tends to favour marriage settlements based on joint ownership of property, offering couples the opportunity to jointly manage joint property and, where necessary, to divide it between them.

Notwithstanding customary law, some women still fall victim to their husband's mismanagement of property.

15.3.1 Widows

Widows are often bullied when it comes to administration of property. When a husband dies, his relatives generally waste no time before appropriating the deceased's property for themselves.

15.3.2 Divorced women

In principle, divorce entails the woman's removal of her personal effects from the marital home, pursuant either to an order pendente lite or to a court decision rendered after the divorce decree.

15.4 Women and the legal process

Article 9 of the Constitution provides as follows:

"No person may be arrested, detained or condemned other than for the reasons and according to the procedures prescribed by law. Every person has the indefeasible right to appear before a judge in order to assert his or her rights before the State and its representatives.

Every person has the right to a just and fair trial in which the right to present a defence is guaranteed.

The law establishes the penalties that must be imposed in proportion to the offences committed."

Article 9 therefore offers a number of guarantees which show that women are full citizens and are entitled, on the same basis as men, to assert their rights whenever necessary.

Women have an equal right to legal representation at all stages of due process. They are also entitled to all of the advantages accorded to men in trial proceedings, particularly the right to appeal should they feel that have been wronged by virtue of a judicial decision. Women also have the right, under exactly the same conditions as men, to refer back a decisory oath.

In contractual matters, adult women face no restrictions and enjoy full legal capacity. In Guinea's economic climate, it is not possible for a contract to be concluded whereby a woman's legal capacity is restricted on the grounds of her gender.

(4) States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile. (art. 15 of the Convention)

With regard to freedom of movement, single adult women are free to travel in so far as they have the means to do so. Married women and divorced women who have custody of children must consult their husbands first.

A widow who enters into a marriage with a relative of her deceased husband is free to continue living in her former husband's home.

However, a widow who enters into a marriage with a man who is not a member of her deceased husband's family will be constantly assailed with criticism from her former husband's family and children.

15.5 Married women

Pursuant to paragraph 2 of article 247 of the Guinean Civil Code, a married woman may have no home other than that provided by her husband. Article 331 of the Code further provides that it is for the husband to choose the family home. A wife must live with her husband and a husband must provide a home for his wife. However, paragraph 2 of the same article stipulates that where the home which the husband chooses presents a threat of a physical or moral nature to the wife, she may exceptionally be authorized to find alternative accommodation for herself and her children pursuant to a decision of the courts.

Here, article 331 imposes the duty of cohabitation, which goes beyond the simple fact of living under the same roof. It also refers to what conventionally are described as conjugal rights, a euphemistic term which the law uses when referring to sexual relations.

The duty of cohabitation ceases to apply in the cases of divorce or separation.

Articles 247 and 331 are discriminatory and should be reviewed in keeping with the spirit of the Convention.

XVI. Marriage and family rights

Article 16

(1) States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

Marriage is one of the world's oldest institutions. It is a universal rite, which is regulated in different ways, according to the social and economic situation of each country.

Civil marriage is the only form of union between a man and a woman which is recognized by Guinean law. Civil marriage has always has been regulated, although certain individuals may infringe the regulations because of local customs. Through marriage many families form bonds with one another and take on mutual obligations. As with the many other rights which are accorded to women on the

same footing as men, the right to enter into marriage is guaranteed to every Guinean citizen (man and woman).

Marriage is protected under article 16 of the Constitution, which states:

"Marriage and the family, which constitute the natural foundation of life in society, are protected and supported by the State..."

In order to achieve a better understanding of the provisions of the law as they relate to marriage, it is necessary to consider the situation of women vis-à-vis matrimony.

16.1 Single women

Single women have the same right as men to enter into marriage, provided that they have reached the age of 17 (art. 280, Guinean Civil Code). The President of the Republic may grant a dispensation from this age requirement for reasons of a grave nature. It should be noted that families may invoke religion as a reason for rejecting a marriage proposal outright.

16.2 Divorced women

The situation of divorced women differs somewhat from that of single women. Divorced women may not conclude a new marriage less than 300 days after the dissolution of their previous marriage. The legislator's manifest intention is to avoid any confusion over paternity (arts. 288 and 355 of the Civil Code).

16.3 Married women

Here, the law is quite categorical. Marriage between a man and a married woman whose marriage has not been dissolved is forbidden (art. 287 of the Civil Code). Likewise, article 315 of the Civil Code prohibits the practice of polygamy by any Guinean national in any part of the Republic of Guinea.

Any man or woman who enters into marriage without their previous marriage ties having first been dissolved faces a criminal penalty of five to 10 years in prison and a fine. The same penalties are imposed upon the civil registrar.

It should be stressed, however, that the above provisions are widely ignored, particularly by men. Traditional laws allow a man to take up to four wives, provided he is able to afford them equitable treatment. The Civil Code contains a number of loopholes which allow men to remarry (art. 317). If the law prohibits polygamy, it is not applied in practice.

16.4 Widows

Pursuant to article 317 of the Civil Code, a widow or widows are free to marry any brother of the deceased whom they choose after the minimum legal period of widowhood has expired. However, a man is allowed to remarry immediately after his wife's death. The provision of the minimum legal period of widowhood ought to be brought into line with the spirit of the Convention.

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent; (art. 16 of the Convention)

From a legal point of view, single or divorced women are free to choose their spouse, provided that the latter is not one of the persons referred to in article 289 of the Civil Code, according to which marriage may not be concluded:

1. In a direct line between any legitimate or illegitimate ascendant and descendant or relations by marriage in the same line;

2. In a collateral line between legitimate and illegitimate brothers and sisters, an uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, great uncle and grand niece, great aunt and grand nephew.

The spouse may also be a foreign national or a Guinean who lives abroad.

Custom dictates that a woman who loses her husband and has no children must marry the brother-in-law of her choice. If she has children, she may marry the man of her choice, provided that the previous wives of this man agree. In practice, a woman's freedom to choose her spouse is severely circumscribed by the inflexible position often taken by her relatives; the latter will try to force a husband upon her, particularly if she lives in a rural area.

16.5 Marriage and consent

Article 281 of the Civil Code stipulates that marriage requires the consent of both spouses. Consent within the meaning of article 282 of the Code must be freely given, unvitiated by violence or any error concerning the person or his or her physical identity.

Looked at closely, these provisions contain no element of discrimination, to the extent that they apply to both the bride and groom without distinction.

A widow cannot be forced to marry a man she has not freely chosen, whether by law or according to custom.

Article 284 of the Civil Code, concerning the question of family consent to a marriage, does not discriminate either. In the absence of the father, the mother may give consent.

The bride and groom agree to marry in the presence of the registrar at the time of marriage.

Annulment of a marriage on the grounds of vitiated consent may be sought only by the spouse whose consent has been vitiated (art. 307 of the Civil Code).

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (art. 16 of the Convention)

The main obligations of a married couple are cohabitation, fidelity and a duty to provide help and assistance.

16.6 Cohabitation

According to article 331 of the Civil Code:

"The choice of the family home is a matter for the husband; the wife has a duty to live with him and he has a duty to receive her." However, the same article also

stipulates that where the home chosen by the husband poses dangers of a physical or moral nature to the wife, the wife may exceptionally be authorized to find alternative accommodation for herself and her children, subject to a decision of the courts.

At first glance, article 331 grants more rights to men than women in terms of the duty of cohabitation, since a wife may only take alternative accommodation by way of an exception and pursuant to a court order. The provision is indeed discriminatory and should be brought into line with the spirit and letter of the Convention.

16.7 The duty of fidelity

The duty of fidelity is incumbent upon both men and women. It represents a civil proscription of adultery.

However, the law does discriminate in its treatment of adulterers. Under articles 341 and 342 of the Civil Code, a husband may seek a divorce on grounds of his wife's adultery, but the opposite does not apply, unless the husband is maintaining his concubine in the marital home. The provision is discriminatory and should be amended in line with the spirit and letter of the Convention.

16.8 Duty to provide support and assistance

According to the Civil Code, husbands and wives have a duty to provide one another with support and assistance (art. 323). The contribution required of each partner depends on whether the couple lives in the countryside or the city.

In the countryside, the wife does most of the work. No account is taken of the informal work which she performs.

In the city, there has been some improvement as regards the kind of assistance which women are expected to give to men.

16.9 The duty to provide assistance

Assistance means the help and material and moral support which each spouse owes to the other. Here, there is no discrimination. The legislator has enacted a number of provisions which protect women's rights. Article 353 of the Guinean Penal Code punishes any husband who voluntarily abandons his wife for no good reason for a period of over two months, knowing her to be pregnant.

The duty to provide assistance should refer to all women, not just women who are pregnant.

The article of the Guinean Penal Code which affords protection of pregnant women should be amended in keeping with the spirit and the letter of the Convention.

16.10 The duty to provide support

The duty to provide support means the duty of a spouse to provide for the economic needs of the other person (accommodation, food, clothing, assistance and so on).

There are various penalties for failure to meet this obligation. A spouse who has been deserted may seek a divorce or separation or may have the other spouse's income seized if that other spouse does not make voluntary payments.

Finally, the deserted spouse may take proceedings against the other person on grounds of desertion and in the conditions set forth under articles 311 and 312 of the Penal Code.

16.11 Contribution of the spouses to household duties

Both spouses are required to contribute to household duties in accordance with their abilities and personal circumstances. This area is governed by the provisions of articles 329 and 330 and 330 of the Civil Code. Article 329 stipulates that each partner contributes to the household in accordance with his or her abilities. Article 330 guarantees each spouse the right to have recourse to the law in order to ensure that the other spouse performs his or her duties.

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; (art. 16 of the Convention)

In all matters relating to children, the legislator gives precedence to the father. Indeed, the mother may only intervene by default, as the following articles of the Civil Code show.

Article 284 of the Civil Code:

"Persons who have not reached the age of 21 years may not enter into marriage without their father's consent, or, in the absence of the father, the consent of the person acting as head of household."

Article 297 of the Civil Code:

"The following persons can object to the celebration of a marriage by invoking any legal impediment:

1. The father or, in the absence of the father, the mother, or, in the absence of the father and mother, the grandfather and grandmother, or any other person acting as head of household;

2. The supervisor of the minor;

3. The Ministry of Public Administration."

Article 334 of the Civil Code:

"Children have a duty to support their mother and father or any other ascendants who may be in need."

Article 359 of the Civil Code:

"Save as provided for under any special agreement between the parties, children shall be entrusted to their father once they have reached the age of seven. In the case where custody is awarded to the mother, the father shall be required to pay child maintenance."

Article 396 of the Civil Code:

"During marriage, the father, as head of household, exercises the right of paternal authority."

These provisions are discriminatory in so far as custody of children is awarded to the father from the moment the child attains the age of seven. This is incompatible with both the letter and the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly article 12 thereof which stipulates the need to hear any child involved in judicial proceedings. These provisions should be brought into line with that Convention, since the rule is that the interests of children are paramount.

The courts do take account of the interests of children when awarding custody in divorce cases.

The Government's political will is manifest in the draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law which addresses the issue of child custody in a manner consistent with the letter and the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The draft Code is currently before the National Assembly for adoption.

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights; (art. 16 of the Convention)

With respect to a woman's right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of her children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable her to exercise this right, the draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law accords both man and wife every right to determine the size of their family.

In order to avail themselves of family planning services, women effectively have to consult their husbands. Nevertheless, there is a genuine desire to change the status quo with the help of initiatives such as are described hereunder.

- Work on the setting up of a reproductive health programme in Coronthin (a district of Conakry) is nearing completion.

- A new population and reproductive health project, designed in collaboration with the World Bank, offers a support fund aimed at improving women's lives in the area of reproductive health. This is a five-year programme, which will run from 1998 to 2003.

- Facilities are offered to national and international non-governmental organizations concerned with reproductive health such as the Guinean Association for Family Health and the International Population Service.

The draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law accords both spouses the legal right to determine the size of their family.

Various awareness campaigns, round tables, conferences, information campaigns and family planning studies have been carried out and have positively affected the reproductive health of women in Guinea.

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount; (art. 16 of the Convention)

16.12 Simple adoption

There is no discrimination between men and women with regard to simple adoption.

Articles 378, 388 and 390 of the Civil Code provide that any Guinean citizen of at least 35 years of age may adopt another person, provided that there is an age difference of at least 15 years between them.

In order to adopt a minor, it is necessary to obtain the consent of his or her natural parents. If one of the parents has died or is unable to make his or her wishes known, the consent of the other parent will suffice (art. 389).

Article 390 adds that a man and wife, one of whom must be aged at least 35, who have been married for 10 years without having any children, may jointly adopt a minor whose parents have died or are unknown.

In truth, however, it can be difficult to exercise of these rights.

By a second form of adoption, known as adoption totale (full adoption), the child acquires the father's name and all of the rights attached thereto.

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation; (art. 16 of the Convention)

There can be no denying that the law fails to satisfy the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There is a need for regulation in this area, particularly in terms of follow-up to adoption, fostering and national and international adoption.

The Government is working hard to prepare the ground through, inter alia, the establishment of an institutional framework, the National Directorate of Preschool Education and Protection of the Child, which has developed management tools for dealing with questions relating to childhood. The Directorate examines files submitted to it for review, organizes social surveys and compiles dossiers for transmission to courts with territorial competence.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Childhood applies to the competent magistrate for the following:

- A supplementary decision which takes the place of a birth certificate;
- A decision concerning adoption.

Supplementary decisions are used for abandoned children and children who are in care.

Copies of decisions are placed on the court record and filed with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Efforts are needed to assure follow-up to international adoptions.

16.13 Guardianship and wardship

As in the case of paternal authority, the legislator provides fathers with significant advantages over mothers for as long as the couple lives together.

The Civil Code does not mention the issue of wardship directly, but refers only to interdiction and legal counsel.

Article 400 of the Code stipulates that during the lifetime of a married couple it is the father who shall be the legal administrator of the property of minor children who have not been emancipated.

The mother may not administer the property of the minor, unless the father has lost the right to perform that function, or he has died or he is in the process of obtaining a divorce.

Article 403 of the Code stipulates that the natural mother is the legal administratrix of the property of her minor children, unless otherwise determined by the court.

Finally, article 406 of the Civil Code provides that only the surviving father has the right to choose a male or female relative or non-relative to act as guardian.

These provisions do not reflect either the spirit or the letter of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and therefore ought to be amended.

Women are free to choose a family name.

However, no provision is made for the right to choose a profession. This is an area which requires regulation.

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration. (art. 16 of the Convention)

16.14 The rights of both spouses in respect of ownership of property

Ownership, within the meaning of article 533 of the Guinean Civil Code, is the right to fully enjoy and dispose of one's property without infringing the law and the regulations in force by so doing.

The right to own property is guaranteed to all (both men and women) under article 13 of the Constitution.

16.15 Acquisition of property

According to article 535 of the Civil Code, property may be acquired by means of inheritance, a settlement, the effect of contracts, accession and positive prescription.

The legislator makes no distinction in law between men and women as regards these five different ways of acquiring property.

In actual fact, women do not inherit fixed assets; the latter are reserved for male descendants. In matters of succession, childless widows and girls sometimes suffer from discrimination.

16.16 Administration of property

Women have the same right as men to freely administer their property, unless they are married, in which case their freedom of action may be curtailed only by virtue of the terms of their marriage settlement. Women are also entitled to all of the privileges associated with ownership of private property. There are no legal restrictions on rights in rem derived from private ownership.

Generally speaking, however, when a husband dies his relatives will appropriate the inheritance of the widow and her minor children for themselves.

16.17 Disposal of property

As for the other prerogatives associated with ownership, the legislator accords women the right to dispose of their property either free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

The right to private property is guaranteed under article 13 of the Civil Code. No one may have their property expropriated, unless it is in the legally established interests of all and against fair and prior compensation. According to article 534, no one can force another person to sell his or her property, unless it is in the public interest and against fair compensation.

In the case of polygamous households, the consent of all of the wives must be given before the husband's fixed assets or land can be sold.

The consent of the husband must be given only for the sale of fixed assets or land belonging to any one of his wives. The agreement of the other wives is not required (art. 560 of the Civil Code).

(2) The betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory. (art. 16 of the Convention)

Single women and men are subject to the same provisions as regards betrothal. A betrothal or engagement which is entered into on either side does not necessarily have to result in marriage (art. 286 of the Civil Code). However, compensation may be required if an engagement is broken for no good reason.

The draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law deals with the question in greater detail.

16.18 The minimum marrying age

Article 280 of the Civil Code specifies that women of less than 17 and men below the age of 18 may not enter into marriage.

In reality, marriages are contracted in the cradle, prematurely, and through the practices of levirate and sororate (see article 5 above).

16.19 Registration of marriage in an official registry

As with all other acts affecting the individual's civil status, all marriages are recorded in the civil status register. The marriage certificate must be signed by the registrar, the bride and groom, their fathers and the other chief witnesses. The fact

that the copy of the marriage certificate is handed to the groom goes against the interests of the wife, since she has to submit the document to the courts when applying for a divorce.

Any marriage by Guinean nationals which is concluded abroad in conformity with local procedures is subject to the same regulations.

Finally, article 217 of the Civil Code states that the marriage certificate of foreign nationals living in Guinea must be drawn up in conformity with Guinean law, on condition that a consular certificate is furnished attesting that the two persons involved are authorized to marry.

In practice, mixed marriages are celebrated under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

16.20 Polygamy

Modern or positive law recognizes monogamy and prohibits polygamy. However, it is difficult to eliminate the practice of polgyamy, an institution which causes the law to fall into abeyance.

While it is true that the banning of polygamy reduced the number of polygamous marriages under the First Republic, it also increased the rate of cohabitation and the incidence of sex without marriage.

Over the long term, citizens managed to bypass the law. The first wife living in the marital home would be asked to give her written consent and this document would then be countersigned by the local police or a judge. The unfortunate wife, under the influence of the Muslim religion and pressure from her family, would be forced to agree to her husband's second marriage. Public opinion and the fact that the marriage had already produced many children would also be cited as pretexts.

In those rare cases where a woman tried to defend her home, social, economic and, above all, religious considerations would force her to desist. Finally, she would be compelled to give in. In the case of a categorical refusal, she could be repudiated.

According to a 1992 survey carried out by three registry offices in Conakry, monogamy is nonetheless gradually gaining ground over polygamous marriage. In the Mafanco district of Conakry, for example, 80 per cent of marriages are monogamous, and the remaining 20 per cent polygamous. The couples involved were born between 1958 and 1965, meaning that they are aged between 27 and 39.

At present, the trend is moving in the opposite direction, with the rate of polygamous marriage rising with respect to monogamous marriage.

Under the Second Republic, the law effectively fell into disuse as it was widely flouted and disregarded at all levels. More needs to be done to ensure that the law on monogamy is applied, through, inter alia, reliable studies of the phenomenon.

Moreover, polygamy is often the consequence of a woman's alleged infertility. Women are discriminated against in such cases. Whereas a husband is allowed to remarry if his wife is infertile, his wife is not afforded the same privilege in the case where it is the husband that is infertile.

Menopausal women living in polygamous households also suffer from discrimination, because they are not allowed to have sexual relations with her husbands once they stop menstruating.

Conclusion

For the 26 years following Guinea's declaration of independence in 1958, the country had a centralized economy. Today, it faces the twin challenges of introducing a pluralist democracy and making the transition towards a free market economy.

The Guinean authorities need to demonstrate the political determination to accord women priority in the projects and programmes initiated by successive Governments.

Efforts made on behalf of Guinean women in the areas of health, education and economic emancipation, together with the active contribution of women themselves to their own self advancement, have seen the emergence of a new class of women moving ineluctably towards independence.

Generally speaking, however, while women in the Republic of Guinea are accorded the same legal rights as men, these gains are powerfully diluted in their daily lives by the coexistence of modern law with customs and traditional and religious practices.

The law and, in particular, the Constitution and the Civil Code, which officially prescribe the conditions and procedures for marriage and divorce, clearly help to elevate the legal status of women by acknowledging their dignity as citizens.

The Civil Code and the Penal Code broadly confer the same rights on women as on men. However, these codified laws are often subject to multiple and contradictory interpretations in the critical areas affecting women's lives, namely marriage, custody of children, employment and inheritance.

Although the majority of legal instruments have been amended or modified to improve the legal status of Guinean women, there are still a number of discriminatory provisions relating to the following:

- The fact that the husband determines where the marital home will be;
- The exercise of authority in marriage;
- The constituent elements of adultery;
- Family allowances.

Although the legislator justifies these provisions in terms of social and cultural constraints, this does not take away from their discriminatory nature, nor their serious consequences for women. The draft Code of Personal Status and Family Law has been drafted and submitted to the Government for approval. Its aim is to correct certain defects in the Civil Code. Thus far, it has faced obstacles of many kinds.

There is also a wide gap between a woman's right to equality before the law and equality as it is practised in everyday life. Discrimination may be practised directly or indirectly. In the first instance, it tends to be obvious and is often perceived as being intentional. Indirect discrimination, on the other hand, may be

the result of economic and social policies and practices which may eschew discrimination, but are nonetheless discriminatory in their effects.

Guinean women acknowledge and are perfectly conscious of their duties towards their husbands, families and society, but are often ignorant of their rights, even in religious matters.

This is often true even of women who have gone through further education. Even those women who do know their rights and understand how they work, do not always embrace them in spirit.

As is well known, when it comes to women's rights, the most critical point is the application of the law. In the Republic of Guinea many laws have been enacted in favour of women, but their application is fraught with difficulties which are caused in particular by social resistance and illiteracy. The formal rights acquired by Guinean women under the First Republic (marriageable age set at 17, the right to refuse to marry or to accept polygamy, equality under certain laws) have largely remained a dead letter.

The Department for the Promotion of Women and various national and international non-governmental organizations working on behalf of women's rights have been trying for years to disseminate information about women's rights to the urban and rural population. However, the persistence of a value system which attaches primordial importance to fertility, the practice of encouraging women to remarry as soon as possible after they lose their husbands, and the discriminatory regulation of inheritance rights represent just some of the main obstacles to the achievement of de facto equality.

Annex 1

Accession and ratification by Guinea of international legal instruments

Convention	*Accession*	*Ratification*	*Comments*
1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights			
2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nation in 1990			
3. The African Charter of Human and People's Rights, signed on 9 December 1991	09/11/1991	16/02/1982	Accession and ratification
4. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	28/02/1967	24/01/1078	Accession and ratification
5. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	28/02/1967	24/01/1078	Accession and ratification
6. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	17/07/1981	09/08/1982	Accession and ratification
7. The Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	26/04/1962		Not yet ratified
8. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women	19/05/1975		Accession and ratification
9. The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.	19/05/1975	24/01/1078	Not yet ratified
10. The Convention on Consent to Marriage, the Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.	10/12/1962	24/01/1078	Accession and ratification

Annex 2

Member of the International Labour Organization since 1959

Convention No.	*Title*	*Registered date of ratification*
C.3	Maternity Protection Convention,	12 December 1966
C.4	Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919[2]	21 January 1959
C.5	Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919	21 January 1959
C.6	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919[3]	21 January 1959
C.10	Minimum Age (Agriculture) Convention, 1921	12 December 1966
C.11	Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921	21 January 1959
C.13	White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921	21 January 1959
C.14	Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	21 January 1959
C.16	Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921	12 December 1966
C.17	Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention, 1925	12 December 1966
C.18	Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention, 1925	12 December 1966
C.26	Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928	21 January 1959
C.29	Forced Labour Convention, 1930	21 January 1959
C.33	Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention, 1932	21 January 1959
C.41	Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1934[4]	21 January 1959
C.45	Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935	12 December 1966
C.52	Holidays with Pay Convention, 1936[5]	12 December 1966
C.62	Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937	12 December 1966
C.81	Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	26 March 1959
C.87	Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948	21 January 1959
C.89	Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948	12 December 1966
C.90	Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948	12 December 1966

[2] Guinea has denounced this Convention (for the States which have ratified the revised conventions, look under Conventions 41 and 89).

[3] Guinea has denounced this Convention and ratified Convention No. 90.

[4] Guinea has denounced this Convention by virtue of its ratification of Convention No. 89.

[5] Guinea has denounced this Convention by virtue of its ratification of Convention No. 132.

Convention No.	*Title*	*Registered date of ratification*
C.94	Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	12 December 1966
C.95	Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	21 January 1959
C.98	Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	26 March 1959
C.99	Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951	12 December 1966
C.100	Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	11 August 1967
C.105	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	11 July 1961
C.111	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1 September 1960
C.112	Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959	7 November 1960